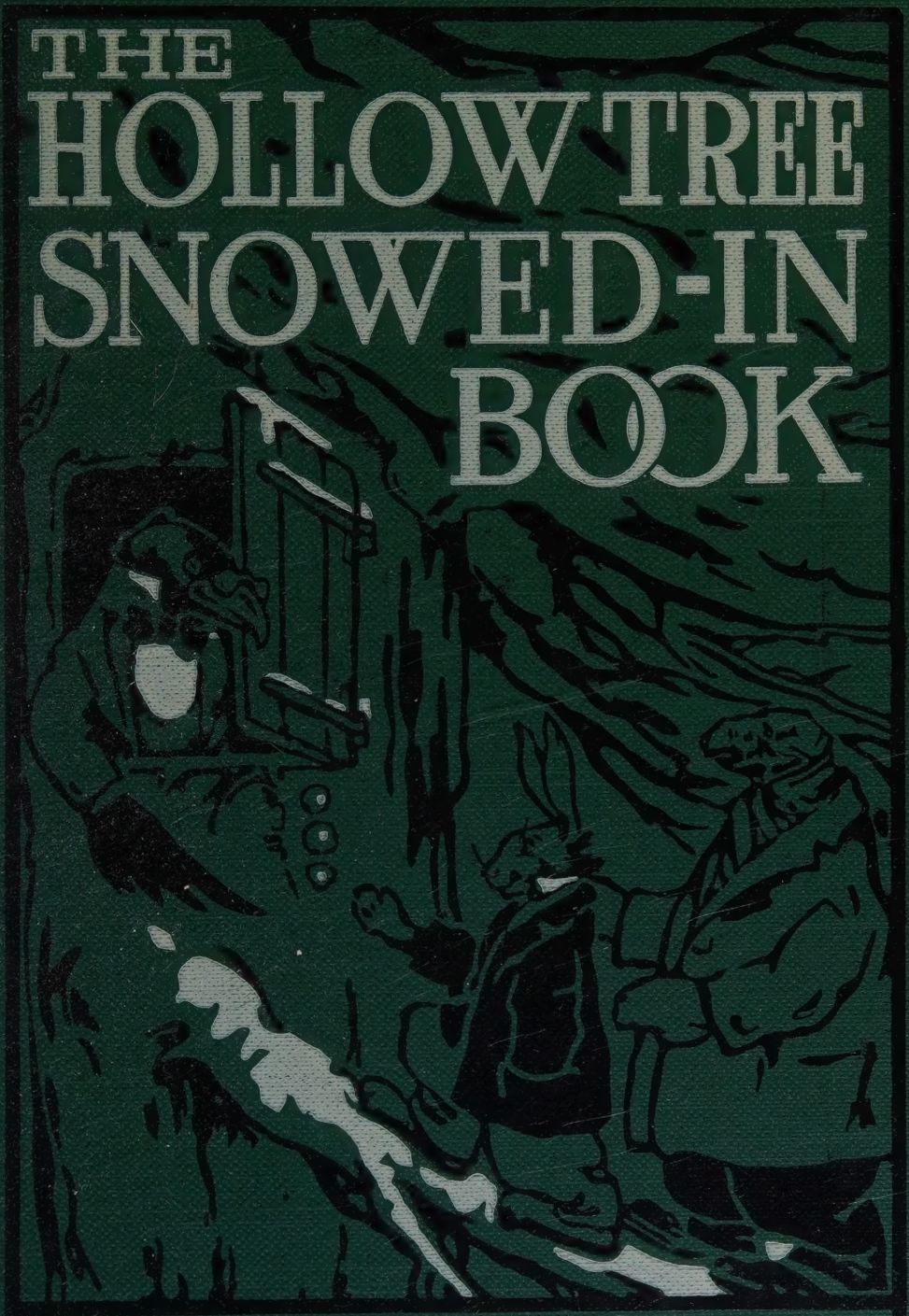
THE HOLLOW TREE SNOWED-IN BOOK



ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE

To Tom + Pete
for their Excellent report
cards – 3d grade.
from
2/27/48 the family.

LAURIAT'S — BOOKS

[See p. 28

THE HOLLOW TREE AND DEEP WOODS PEOPLE

Mr. Crow, Mr. Turtle, Mr. 'Coon, Mr. 'Possum, Mr. Robin, Mr. Squirrel, Mr. Dog, Mr. Rabbit

THEN MR. DOG SAID: "I KNOW ALL ABOUT MENAGERIES, FOR I HAVE BEEN TO ONE"

THE HOLLOW TREE SNOWED-IN BOOK

BEING A CONTINUATION OF THE STORIES ABOUT
THE HOLLOW TREE AND DEEP WOODS PEOPLE

BY

ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE

AUTHOR OF
"THE HOLLOW TREE AND DEEP WOODS BOOK"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
J. M. CONDÉ

NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

Books by

ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE

For Young Readers

THE BOYS' LIFE OF MARK TWAIN
HOLLOW TREE NIGHTS AND DAYS
THE HOLLOW TREE AND DEEP-WOODS BOOK
THE HOLLOW TREE SNOWED-IN BOOK

Small books of several stories each, selected from the above Hollow Tree books:

HOW MR. DOG GOT EVEN
HOW MR. RABBIT LOST HIS TAIL
MR. RABBIT'S BIG DINNER
MAKING UP WITH MR. DOG
MR. 'POSSUM'S GREAT BALLOON TRIP
WHEN JACK RABBIT WAS A LITTLE BOY

For Grown-ups

DWELLERS IN ARCADY
MARK TWAIN: A Biography
TH. NAST: His Period and His Pictures
THE SHIP-DWELLERS (Humorous travel)
THE TENT-DWELLERS (Humorous camping)
FROM VAN-DWELLER TO COMMUTER (Humorous, home life)
PEANUT (Story of a boy)

HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK

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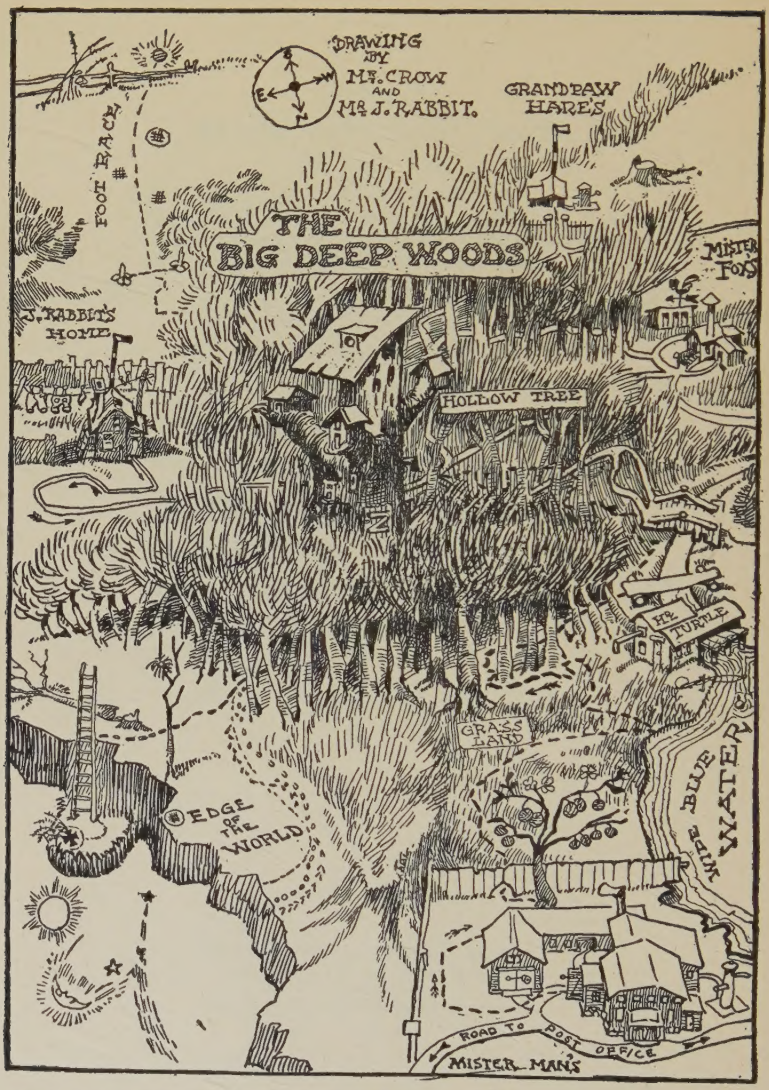
TO ALL DWELLERS IN
THE BIG DEEP WOODS OF DREAM



MAP OF THE HOLLOW TREE AND DEEP WOODS COUNTRY

EXPLANATION OF MAP

The top of the map is South. This is always so with the Hollow Tree People. The cross on the shelf below the edge of the world (where the ladder is) is where Mr. Dog landed, and the ladder is the one brought by Mr. Man for him to climb back on. The tree that Mr. Man cut down shows too. The spot on the edge of the world is where the Hollow Tree People sometimes sit and hang their feet over, and talk. A good many paths show, but not all by a good deal. The bridge and plank near Mr. Turtle's house lead to the Wide Grass Lands and Big West Hills. The spots along the Foot Race show where Grandpaw Hare stopped, and the one across the fence shows where Mr. Turtle landed. Most of the other things tell what they are, and all the things are a good deal farther apart than they look. Of course there was not room on the map for everything.

TO FRIENDS OLD AND NEW

I WONDER if you have ever heard a story which begins like this: "Once upon a time, in the far depths of the Big Deep Woods, there was a Big Hollow Tree with three hollow branches. In one of these there lived a 'Coon, in another a 'Possum, and in the third a Big Black Crow."

That was the way the first story began in a book which told about the Hollow Tree People and their friends of the Big Deep Woods who used to visit them, and how they all used to sit around the table, or by the fire, in the parlor-room down-stairs, where they kept most of their things, and ate and talked and had good times together, just like folk.*

And the stories were told to the Little Lady by the Story Teller, and there were pictures made for them by the Artist, and it was all a long time ago—so long ago that the Little Lady has grown to be almost a big lady now, able to read stories for herself, and to write them, too, sometimes.

But the Story Teller and the Artist did not grow any older. The years do not make any difference to them. Like the Hollow Tree People they remain always the same, for though to see them you might think by their faces and the silver glint in their hair that they

* *The Hollow Tree and Deep Woods Book*, by the same author and artist.

are older, it would not be so, because these things are only a kind of enchantment, made to deceive, when all the time they are really with the Hollow Tree People in the Big Deep Woods, where years and enchantments do not count. It was only Mr. Dog, because he lived too much with Mr. Man, who grew old and went away to that Far Land of Evening which lies beyond the sunset, taking so many of the Hollow Tree stories with him. We thought these stories were lost for good when Mr. Dog left us, but that was not true, for there came another Mr. Dog—a nephew of our old friend—and he grew up brave and handsome, and learned the ways of the Hollow Tree People, and their stories, and all the old tales which the first Mr. Dog did not tell.

And now, too, there is another Little Lady—almost exactly like the first Little Lady—and it may be that it is this Little Lady, after all, who keeps the Artist and the Story Teller young, for when she thought they might be growing older, and forgetting, she went with them away from the House of Many Windows, in the city, to the House of Low Ceilings and Wide Fireplaces—a queer old house like Mr. Rabbit's—built within the very borders of the Big Deep Woods, where they could be always close to Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum and the Old Black Crow, and all the others, and so learn all the new tales of the Hollow Tree.

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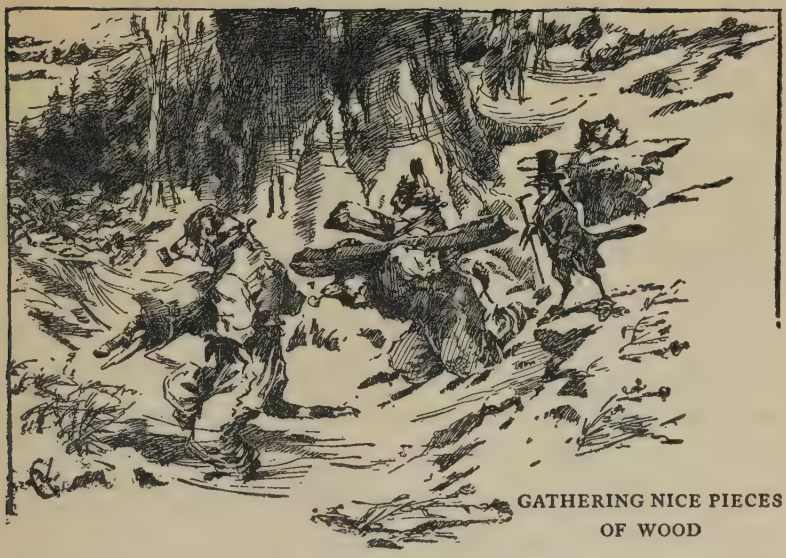
THE FIRST SNOWED-IN STORY



GATHERING NICE PIECES OF WOOD

THE FIRST SNOWED-IN STORY

IN WHICH THE READER LEARNS TO KNOW THE HOLLOW TREE PEOPLE AND THEIR FRIENDS, AND THE LITTLE LADY, AND THE STORY TELLER

NOW this is the beginning of the Hollow Tree stories which the Story Teller told the Little Lady in the queer old house which stands in the very borders of the Big Deep Woods itself. They were told in the Room of the Lowest Ceiling and the Widest Fire—a ceiling so low that when the Story Teller stands upright it brushes his hair

as he walks, and a fire so deep that pieces of large trees do not need to be split but can be put on whole. In the old days, several great-grandfathers back, as the Hollow Tree People might say, these heavy sticks were drawn in by a horse that came right through the door and dragged the wood to the wide stone hearth.

It is at the end of New-Year's Day, and the Little Lady has been enjoying her holidays, for Santa Claus found his way down the big stone chimney and left a number of things she wanted. Now, when the night is coming down outside, and when inside there is a heap of blazing logs and a rocking-chair, it is time for the Story Teller. The Story Teller generally smokes and looks into the fire when he tells a Hollow Tree story, because the Hollow Tree People always smoke and look into the fire when *they* tell *their* stories, and the Little Lady likes everything to be "just the same," and the stories must be always told just the same, too. If they are not, she stops the Story Teller and sets him right. So while the Little Woman passes to and fro, putting away the tea-things, the Story Teller lights his pipe, and rocks, and looks into the fire, and holds the Little Lady close, and begins the Tales of the Hollow Tree.

"Once upon a time," he begins—

"Once upon a time," murmurs the Little Lady, settling herself.

"Yes, once upon a time, in the old days of the Hollow Tree, when Mr. Dog had become friends with the 'Coon and the 'Possum and the Old Black Crow who lived in the three hollow branches of the Big Hollow Tree, and used to meet together in their parlor-room down-stairs and invite all their friends, and have good times together, just like folk—"

"But they live there now, don't they?" interrupts the Little Lady, suddenly sitting up, "and still have their friends, just the same?"

"Oh yes, of course, but this was one of the old times, you know."

The Little Lady settles back, satisfied.

"Go on telling, now," she says.

"Well, then, this was one of the times when all the Deep Woods People had been invited to the Hollow Tree for Christmas Day, and were snowed in. Of course they didn't expect to be snowed in. Nobody ever expects to be snowed in till it happens, and then it's too late."

"Was that the Christmas that Mr. Dog played Santa Claus and brought all the presents, and Mr. Squirrel and Mr. Robin and Mr. Turtle and Jack Rabbit came over, and they all sat around the fire and ate things and told nice stories? You said you would tell about that, and you never did."

"I am going to tell it now, as soon as a Little Lady gets real still," says the Story Teller. So then the Little Lady *is* "real still," and he tells the first snowed-in story, which is called:

MR. DOG AT THE CIRCUS

MR. DOG AT THE CIRCUS

THE HOLLOW TREE PEOPLE LEARN SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT ABOUT SHOWS

THAT was a great Christmas in the Hollow Tree. The 'Coon and the 'Possum and the Old Black Crow had been getting ready for it for a long time, and brought in ever so many nice things to eat, which Mr. Crow had cooked for them, for Mr. Crow is the best cook of anybody in the Big Deep Woods. Then Mr. Dog had brought a lot of good things, too, which he had borrowed from Mr. Man's house, so they had the finest Christmas dinner that you can think of, and plenty for the next day when it would be even better, because chicken and turkey and dressing and such things are always better the next day, and even the *third* day, with gravy, than they are when they are first cooked.

Then, when they were all through and were standing around, smoking their new pipes and looking at each other's

THE PANTRY IN THE HOLLOW TREE

new neckties and other Christmas things, Mr. Crow said that he and Mr. Squirrel would clear off the table if the others would get in some wood and stir up the fire and set the room to rights, so they could gather round and be comfortable by-and-by; and then, he said, it might snow as much as it liked as long as they had plenty of wood and things to eat inside.

So then they all skurried around getting on their things to go out after wood—all except Mr. Crow and Mr. Squirrel, who set about clearing off the table and doing up the dishes. And pretty soon Mr. Dog and Mr. 'Coon and the rest were hopping about where the snow was falling so soft and silent among the big, leafless trees, gathering nice pieces of wood and brushing the snow off of them and piling them into the first down-stairs of the Hollow Tree, which the 'Coon and 'Possum and Old Black Crow use for their wood-house and general store-room. It was great fun, and they didn't feel the least bit cold after their warm dinner and with all that brisk exercise.

Mr. Robin didn't help carry the wood in. He was hardly strong enough for that, but he hopped about and looked for good pieces, and when he found one he would call to Mr. 'Coon or Mr. 'Possum, or maybe to one of the others, to throw it on his shoulder and carry it in, and then he would tell whoever it happened to be how strong he was and how

fine he looked with that great chunk on his shoulder, and would say that he didn't suppose there was another 'Coon, or 'Possum, or Turtle, or Rabbit, or Dog that could begin to stand up straight under such a chunk as that anywhere outside of a menagerie. Mr. Robin likes to say pleasant things to his friends, and is always popular. And each one tried to carry the biggest load of wood to show how strong he was, and pretty soon they had the lower room of the Hollow Tree piled up high with the finest chunks and kindling pieces to be found anywhere. Then they all hurried up-stairs, stamping the snow off their feet, and gathered around the nice warm fire in the big parlor which was just below the three big hollow branches where the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow had their rooms.

Mr. Crow and Mr. Squirrel were through with the table by this time, and all hands lit their pipes, and looked into the fire, and smoked, and rested, and thought a little before they began talking—thinking, of course, of what a good time they were having, and how comfortable and nice it was to be inside and warm when such a big snow was falling outside.

Mr. 'Possum was the first one to say anything. He said he had been thinking of what Mr. Robin had said about them being outside of a menagerie, and that, come to think about it, he believed he didn't know what a menagerie was, unless it was a new name for a big dinner, as that was the only thing

he could think of now that they were outside of, and he said if that was so, and if he could get outside of two menageries, he thought he could carry in a bigger chunk than any two chunks there were down-stairs.

Then all the others laughed a good deal, and Mr. 'Coon said he had thought that perhaps a menagerie was something to wear that would make anybody who had it on very strong, and able to stand up under a big load, and to eat as much as Mr. 'Possum could, or even more.

But Mr. Robin said that it didn't mean either of those things. He said he didn't really know what it did mean himself, but that it must be some kind of a place that had a great many large creatures in it, for he had heard his grandmother quite often call his grandfather the biggest goose outside of a menagerie, though, being very young then, Mr. Robin couldn't remember just what she had meant by it.

Mr. Rabbit said he thought that the word "menagerie" sounded like some kind of a picnic, with swings and nice lively games, and Mr. Crow said that once when he was flying he passed over a place where there was a big sign that said "Menagerie" on it, and that there were some tents and a crowd of people and a great noise, but that he hadn't seen anything that he could carry off without being noticed, so he didn't stop.

Mr. Squirrel thought that from what Mr. Crow said it

must be a place where there would be a lot of fine things to see, and Mr. Turtle said that he was a good deal over three hundred years old and had often heard of a menagerie, but that he had never seen one. He said he had always supposed that it was a nice pond of clear water, with a lot of happy turtles and fish and wild geese and duck and such things, in it, and maybe some animals around it, all living happily together, and taken care of by Mr. Man, who brought them a great many good things to eat. He had always thought he would like to live in a menagerie, he said, but that nobody had ever invited him, and he had never happened to come across one in his travels.

Mr. Dog hadn't been saying anything all this time, but he knocked the ashes out of his pipe now, and filled it up fresh and lit it, and cleared his throat, and began to talk. It made him smile, he said, to hear the different ways people thought of a thing they had never seen. He said that Mr. Turtle was the only one who came anywhere near to what a menagerie really was, though of course Mr. Crow *had* seen one on the outside. Then Mr. Dog said:

"I know all about menageries, on the outside and the inside too, for I have been to one. I went once with Mr. Man, though I wasn't really invited to go. In fact, Mr. Man invited me to stay at home, and tried to slip off from me; but I watched which way he went, and took long roundin's

"SLIPPED IN BEHIND HIM WHEN HE WENT INTO THE TENT"

on him, and slipped in behind him when he went into the tent. He didn't know for a while that I was there, and I wasn't there so very long. But it was plenty long enough—a good deal longer than I'd ever stay again, unless I was tied.

"I never saw so many wild, fierce-looking creatures in my life as there were in that menagerie, and they were just as wild and fierce as they looked. They had a lot of cages full of them and they had some outside of cages, though I don't know why they should leave any of those dangerous animals around where they could damage folks that happened to come in reach, as I did. Those animals outside didn't look as wild and fierce as those in the cages, but they were.

"I kept in the crowd, close behind Mr. Man at first, and nobody knew I was there, but by-and-by he climbed up into a seat to watch some people all dressed up in fancy clothes ride around a ring on horses, which I didn't care much about, so I slipped away, and went over to where there were some things that I wanted to take my time to and see quietly.

"There was an animal about my size and style tied over in one corner of the tent, behind a rope, with a sign in front of him which said, 'The Only Tame Hyena in the World.' He looked smiling and good-natured, and I went over to ask him some questions.

"HE LOOKED SMILING AND GOOD-NATURED, AND I WENT OVER TO ASK HIM SOME QUESTIONS"

"But that sign wasn't true. He wasn't the least bit tame, and I'm sure now that he wasn't smiling. He grabbed me before I had a chance to say a word, and when I jerked loose, which I did right away, for I didn't want to stir up any fuss there, I left quite a piece of my ear with the tame hyena, and tripped backward over the rope and rolled right in front of a creature called an elephant, about as big as a house and not as useful.

"I suppose they thought *he* was tame, too, but he must have been tamed by the same man, for he grabbed me with a kind of a tail that grew on the end of his nose—a thing a good deal like Mr. 'Possum's tail, only about a million times as big—and I could hear my ribs crack as he waved me up and down.

"Of course, as I say, I didn't want to stir up any fuss, but I couldn't keep still under such treatment as that, and I called right out to Mr. Man, where he sat looking at the fancy people riding, and told him that I had had enough of the show, and if he wanted to take any of me home he ought not to wait very long, but come over that way and see if he couldn't get the tame elephant to practise that performance on the hyena or the next dog, because I had had plenty, and was willing to go home just as I was, all in one piece, even if not very lively.

"Mr. Man *came*, too, and so did a lot of the others. They

seemed to think that I was more to look at than those riding people; and some of them laughed, though what there was happening that was funny I have never been able to guess to this day. I kept right on telling Mr. Man what I wanted him to do, and mebbe I made a good deal of noise about it, for it seemed to stir up those other animals. There was a cage full of lions that started the most awful roaring you can think of, and a cage of crazy-looking things they called monkeys that screeched and howled and swung back and forth in rings and held on to the bars, and all the other things joined in, until I couldn't tell whether I was still saying anything or not. I suppose they were all jealous of the elephant because of the fun he was having, and howling to be let out so they could get hold of me too.

"Well, you never heard of such a time. It nearly broke up the show. Everybody ran over to look, and even the riding people stopped their horses to enjoy it, too. If it only hadn't been so dangerous and unpleasant I should have been proud of the way they came to see me perform.

"But Mr. Man didn't seem to like it much. I heard him tell somebody, as loud as he could, that I would be killed, and that I was the best dog he ever had, and that if I *was* killed he'd sue the show.

"That made me proud, too, but I wished he wouldn't

wait to sue the show, but would do something right away, and just then a man with a fancy dress on and a stick with a sharp iron hook on it came running up and said something I didn't understand and hit the elephant with the hook end of the stick, and he gave me an extra big swing and crack and flung me half-way across the tent, where I landed on a bunch of hay right in front of a long-necked thing called a camel—another terrible tame creature, I suppose—who had me about half eaten up with his old long under lip, before Mr. Man could get over there.

"When Mr. Man did get hold of me, he said that I'd better take what was left of me home, for they were going to feed the animals pretty soon, and that I would likely get mixed up with the bill of fare.

"After that he took me to the entrance and pushed me outside, and I heard all those fierce creatures in the cages growl and roar louder than ever, as if they had expected to sample me and were sorry to see me go.

"That's what a menagerie is—it's a place where they have all the kinds of animals and things in the world, for show, and a good many birds, and maybe turtles, too, but they don't have any fine clear pond. They have just a big tent, like the one Mr. Crow saw, and a lot of cages inside. They keep most of the animals in cages, and they ought to keep them all there, and I don't think they feed them

"GAVE ME AN EXTRA BIG SWING AND CRACK"

very much, nor the best things, or they wouldn't look so fierce and hungry.

"They just keep them for Mr. Man and his friends to look at and talk about, and if Mr. Turtle will take my advice he will keep out of a menagerie and live in the Wide Blue Water where he was born. I wouldn't have gone there again unless I had been tied and dragged there, or unless they had put those tame animals into cages with the others. No doubt there are some very fine, strong animals in a menagerie, but they wouldn't be there if they could help it, and if anybody ever invites any of you to join a menagerie, take my advice and don't do it."

Then Mr. Dog knocked the ashes out of his pipe again, and all the other Deep Woods People knocked the ashes out of *their* pipes, too, and filled them up fresh, and one said one thing, and one said another about being in a menagerie or out of it, and every one thought it would be a terrible thing to be shut up in a cage, except Mr. 'Possum, who said he wouldn't mind it if they would let him sleep enough and give him all he could eat, but that a cage without those things would be a lonesome place.

Then Mr. 'Coon said that a little adventure had happened to him once which he had never mentioned before, because he had never known just what to make of it; but he knew now, he said, that he had come very near getting

into a menagerie, and he would tell them just what happened.

The Story Teller looked down at the quiet figure in his lap. The Little Lady's head was nestled close to his shoulder, and her eyes were straining very hard to keep open.

"I think we will save Mr. 'Coon's story till another night," he said.

THE SECOND SNOWED-IN STORY

THE
SECOND SNOWED-IN STORY

MR. 'COON TELLS HOW HE CAME NEAR BEING A PART OF A MENAGERIE, AND HOW HE ONCE TOLD A STORY TO MR. DOG

"YOU can tell about Mr. 'Coon, now—the story you didn't tell last night, you know," and the Little Lady wriggles herself into a comfortable corner just below the Story Teller's smoke, and looks deep into a great cavern of glowing embers between the big old andirons, where, in her fancy, she can picture the Hollow Tree people and their friends.

"Why, yes, let me see—" says the Story Teller.

"Mr. Dog had just told about being at the menagerie, you know, and Mr. 'Coon was just going to tell how he came very near getting into a menagerie himself."

"Oh yes, of course—well, then, all the Hollow Tree people, the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow, and

their friends who were visiting them—Mr. Dog and Mr. Robin and Jack Rabbit and Mr. Turtle and Mr. Squirrel—knocked the ashes out of their pipes and filled them up fresh—"

"No, they had just done that."

"That's so, I forgot. Well, anyway, as soon as they got to smoking and settled back around the fire again Mr. 'Coon told them his story, and I guess we'll call it

MR. 'COON'S EARLY ADVENTURE

Mr. 'Coon said he was quite young when it happened, and was taking a pleasant walk one evening, to think over things a little, and perhaps to pick out a handy tree where Mr. Man's chickens roosted, when all at once he heard a fierce bark close behind him, and he barely had time to get up a tree himself when a strange and very noisy Mr. Dog was leaping about at the foot of the tree, making a great fuss, and calling every moment for Mr. Man to hurry, for he had a young 'coon treed.

"Of course I laid pretty low when I heard that," Mr. 'Coon said, "for I knew that Mr. Man would most likely have a gun, so I got into a bunch of leaves and brush that must have been some kind of an old nest and scrooched down so that none of me would show.

ALL AT ONCE HE HEARD A FIERCE BARK CLOSE BEHIND HIM

"Then by-and-by I heard some big creature come running through the brush, and I peeked over a little, and there, sure enough, was Mr. Man with a long gun, and I noticed that he wore a thing on his head—a sort of hat, I suppose—made of what looked to be the skin of some relative of mine.

"Of course that made me mad. I hadn't cared so much until I saw that; but I said right then to myself that any one who would do such a thing as that never could be a friend of mine, no matter how much he tried. So I scrooched down and laid low in that old nest, and didn't move or let on in any way that I was there.

"Then I heard Mr. Man walking around the tree and talking to his dog and telling him that there wasn't anything up in that tree at all, and that Mr. Dog had just been fooling him. I could tell by his voice that he was getting mad at Mr. Dog, and I hoped that he'd get mad enough pretty soon to take a stick to him for chasing me up a tree like that, and then calling for Mr. Man to come and see me when there wasn't really anything to look at.

"But Mr. Dog kept galloping around the tree and barking out, over and over, that I was there; that he had seen me, and that he knew that I was hiding up there somewhere; and pretty soon I heard Mr. Man going away, and I peeked over again.

"Sure enough, he was going, but Mr. Dog was staying

right there, sitting under the tree and looking up and making a good deal more noise than there was any need of to let me know he hadn't gone. I didn't see why he stayed there. I wished he'd go away and tend to his own business.

"Being quite young, I still lived with my folks over near the Wide Grass Lands, and I wanted to get home for supper. It was a good way to go, for the tree I had climbed was over close to the edge of the world where the sun and moon rise, and you all know that's a good way, even from here.

"Well, he didn't go, but just sat there, barking up that tree, and after a long time I heard somebody coming again, and I peeked over and there was Mr. Man, hurrying back, this time with an axe. I knew, right then, there was going to be trouble. I knew they were going to cut that tree down, and that I should most likely have quite a fuss with Mr. Dog, and perhaps go home with a black eye and a scratched nose, and then get whipped again for fighting, after I got there."

Mr. 'Coon stopped and knocked the ashes out of his pipe and filled it up fresh, and all the others knocked the ashes out of their pipes and filled them up fresh, too. Then Mr. 'Possum poked up the fire and told Mr. Turtle to bring a stick of wood from down-stairs, and when it was blazing up high and bright again they all stepped over to the window a minute, to see how hard it was snowing and

banking up outside, then went back to their chairs around the fire, and stretched out their feet and leaned back and smoked, and listened to the rest of Mr. 'Coon's story.

Mr. 'Coon said he didn't like the sound of that axe when Mr. Man began to cut the tree down.

"Every time he struck the tree I could feel it all through me," he said, "and I knew if he kept that noise up long enough it would give me a nervous headache. I wished the tree would hurry up and drop, so we could have what muss we were going to, and get it over with. I'd have got out of that old nest and made a jump for another tree if there had been any near enough, but there wasn't, so I just laid low and gritted my teeth and let him chop.

"Well, by-and-by that tree began to go down. It seemed to teeter a little at first, this way and that; then it went very slow in one direction; then it went a little faster; then it went a good deal faster; then I suddenly felt like a shooting-star, I came down so fast, and there was a big crash, and I thought I had turned into a lot of stars, sure enough, and was shooting in every direction, and the next I knew I was tied to a tree, hand and foot and around the middle, and Mr. Man and Mr. Dog were sitting and looking at me, and grinning, and talking about what they were going to do.

"Mr. Man wasn't scolding Mr. Dog any more. He was

"THEN I SUDDENLY FELT LIKE A SHOOTING-STAR"

telling him what a good thing it was they had caught me alive, for now they could sell me to a show and get a great deal more for me than they could for my skin. I didn't know what a show was, then, or that a show is a menagerie, but I know now, and I can see just what they meant.

"Pretty soon Mr. Man told Mr. Dog to stay there and watch me while he went home after a box to put me in. He said he didn't think it would be safe to carry me in his arms, and he was right about that.

"So then Mr. Man walked off, and left Mr. Dog guarding me, and saying unpleasant things to me now and then.

"At first I wouldn't answer him; but pretty soon I happened to think of something pleasant to say:

"'Mr. Dog,' I said, 'I know a good story, if you'd like me to tell it. Mr. Man may be a good while getting that box, and mebbe you'd like to hear something to pass the time.'

"Mr. Dog said he would. He said that Mr. Man would most likely have to make the box, and he didn't suppose he knew where the hammer and nails were, and it might be dark before Mr. Man got back.

"I felt a good deal better when I heard Mr. Dog say that, and I told him a story I knew about how Mr. Rabbit lost his tail, and Mr. Dog laughed and seemed to like it, and said, 'Tell me another.'"

"THEN MR. DOG SAID, 'TELL ME ANOTHER'"

Before Mr. 'Coon could go on with his story, Mr. Rabbit said that of course if that old tale had helped Mr. 'Coon out of trouble he was very glad, but that it wasn't at all true, and that some time *he* would tell them himself the true story of how it happened.

Then they all said that they hoped he would, for they'd always wanted to hear that story told right, and then Mr. 'Coon went on with his adventure.

Mr. 'Coon said that when Mr. Dog said, "Tell me another," he knew he was in a good-humor, and that he felt better and better himself. "I thought if Mr. Man didn't come back too soon," he said, "I might get along pretty well with Mr. Dog.

"'I know another story, Mr. Dog,' I said—'the funniest story there is. It would make you laugh until you fell over the edge of the world, but I can't tell it here.'

"'Why,' he said—'why can't you tell it here as well as anywhere?'

"'Because it has to be acted,' I said, 'and my hands are tied.'

"'Will you tell it if I untie your hands?' said Mr. Dog.

"'Well,' I said, 'I'll begin it, and you can see how it goes.'

"So Mr. Dog came over and untied my hands, for he said he could tie them again before Mr. Man came back, because he knew Mr. Man hadn't found that hammer yet.

"'You can't get loose with just your hands untied, can you?' he said.

"'No, of course not, Mr. Dog,' I said, pleasant and polite as could be.

"'Let's see you try,' said Mr. Dog.

"So I twisted and pulled, and of course I couldn't get loose.

"'Now tell the story,' said Mr. Dog.

"So I said: 'Once there was a man who had a very bad pain in his chest, and he took all kinds of medicine, and it didn't do him any good. And one day the Old Wise Man of the Woods told him if he would rub his chest with one hand and pat his head with the other, it might draw the pain out the top and cure him. So the man with the pain in his chest tried it, and he did it this way.'

"Then I showed Mr. Dog just how he did it, and Mr. Dog thought that was funny, and laughed a good deal.

"'Go on and tell the rest of it,' he said. 'What happened after that?'

"But I let on as if I'd just remembered something, and I said, 'Oh, Mr. Dog, I'm *so* sorry, but I can't tell the rest of that story here, and it's the funniest part, too. I know you'd laugh till you rolled over the edge of the world.'

"'Why can't you tell the rest of that story here as well as anywhere?' said Mr. Dog, looking anxious.

"'Because it has to be acted with the feet,' I said, 'and my feet are tied.'

"'Will you tell it if I untie your feet?' said Mr. Dog.

"'Well, I'll do the best I can,' I said.

"So Mr. Dog came over and untied my feet. He said he knew that Mr. Man hadn't found the nails or the pieces to make the box yet, and there would be plenty of time to tie me again before Mr. Man got back.

"'You can't get loose, anyway, with just your hands and feet untied, can you?' he said.

"' No, of course not, Mr. Dog,' I said, more pleasant and polite than ever.

"' Let's see you try,' said Mr. Dog.

"So I squirmed and twisted, but of course with a strong string around my waist and tied behind I couldn't do anything.

"' Now go on with the story,' said Mr. Dog.

"'Well,' I said, 'the pain left his chest, but it went into his back, and he had a most terrible time, until one day the Old Wise Man of the Woods came along and told him that he thought he ought to know enough by this time to rub his back where the pain was and pat his head at the same time to draw it out at the top. So then the man with the pain rubbed his back and patted his head this way,' and I showed Mr. Dog how he did it; and I rubbed a good while about where the knot was, and made a face to show

"AND DID ROLL OFF THE EDGE OF THE WORLD, SURE ENOUGH"

how the man with the pain looked, and then I said the pain came back into his chest again instead of being drawn out at the top; and I changed about and rubbed there awhile, and then I went around to my back again, chasing that pain first one side and the other; and then I said that the Old Wise Man of the Woods came along one day and told him that he must kick with his feet too if he ever wanted to get rid of that pain, because, after all, it might have to be kicked out at the bottom; and when I began to kick and dance with both feet and to rub with my hands at the same time, Mr. Dog gave a great big laugh—the biggest laugh I ever heard anybody give—and fell right down and rolled over and over, and did roll off the edge of the world, sure enough.

"I heard him go clattering into a lot of brush and blackberry bushes that are down there, and just then I got that back knot untied, and I stepped over and looked down at Mr. Dog, who had lodged in a brier patch on a shelf about ten feet below the edge, where Mr. Man would have to get him up with a ladder or a rope.

"'Do you want to hear the rest of the story, Mr. Dog?' I said.

"'I'll story *you*," he said, 'when I catch you!'

"'I told you you'd laugh till you fell off the edge of the world,' I said.

"I SET OUT FOR HOME WITHOUT WAITING TO SAY GOOD-BYE"

"'I'll make *you* laugh,' he said, 'when I catch you!'

"Then I saw he was cross about something, and I set out for home without waiting to say good-bye to Mr. Man, for I didn't want to waste any more time, though I missed my supper and got a scolding besides.

"But I was glad I didn't bring home a black eye and scratched nose, and I'm more glad than ever now that Mr. Man didn't get back in time with that box, or I might be in a menagerie this minute instead of sitting here smoking and telling stories and having a good time on Christmas Day."

The Story Teller looks down at the Little Lady.

"I'm glad Mr. 'Coon didn't get into the menagerie, aren't you?" she says.

"Very glad," says the Story Teller.

"He went lickety-split home, didn't he?"

"He did that!"

"I like them to go lickety-split better than lickety-cut, don't you?" says the Little Lady. "They seem to go so much faster."

"Ever so much faster," says the Story Teller.

THE WIDOW CROW'S BOARDING-HOUSE

THE WIDOW CROW'S BOARDING-HOUSE

EARLY DOINGS OF THE HOLLOW TREE PEOPLE AND HOW THEY FOUND A HOME

ANYBODY can tell by her face that the Little Lady has some plan of her own when the Story Teller is ready next evening to "sit by the fire and spin."

"I want you to tell me," she says, climbing up into her place, "how the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow ever got to living together in the Hollow Tree."

That frightens the Story Teller. He is all ready with something different.

"Good gracious!" he says, "that is an old story that all the Deep Woods People have known ever so long."

"But I don't know it," says the Little Lady, "and I'd like to know that before you tell anything else. Rock, and tell it."

So the Story Teller rocks slowly, and smokes, and almost

forgets the Little Lady in remembering that far-away time, and presently he begins.

Well, it was all so long ago that perhaps I can't remember it very well. Mr. 'Possum was a young man in those days—a nice spry young fellow; and he used to think it was a good deal of fun to let Mr. Dog—who wasn't friendly then, of course—try to catch him; and when Mr. Dog would get pretty close and come panting up behind him, Mr. 'Possum would scramble up a tree, and run out on to the longest limb and swing from it, head down, and laugh, and say:

"Come right up, Mr. Dog! Always at home to you, Mr. Dog! Don't stop to knock!"

And then Mr. Dog would race around under the tree and make a great to do, and sometimes Mr. 'Possum would swing back and forth, and pretty soon give a great big swing and let go, and Mr. Dog would think surely he had him then, and bark and run to the place where he thought he was going to drop. Only Mr. 'Possum didn't drop—not far; for he had his limb all picked out, and he would catch it with his tail as he went by, and it would bend and sway with him, and he would laugh, and call again:

"Don't go, Mr. Dog! Mr. Man can get up the cows alone to-night!"

And then Mr. Dog would remember that he was a good ways from home, and that if he wasn't there in time to help

CAME CLATTERING DOWN RIGHT IN FRONT OF MR. DOG

Mr. Man get up the cows there might be trouble; and he would set out lickety-split for home, with Mr. 'Possum calling to him as he ran.

But one time Mr. 'Possum made a mistake. He didn't know it, but he was getting older and a good deal fatter than he had been at first, and when he swung out for another limb that way, and let go, he missed the limb and came clattering down right in front of Mr. Dog. He wasn't hurt much, for the ground was soft, and there was a nice thick bed of leaves; but I tell you he was scared, and when Mr. Dog jumped right on top of him, and grabbed him, he gave himself up for lost, sure enough.

But Mr. 'Possum is smart in some ways, and he knows how to play "dead" better than any other animal there is. He knew that Mr. Dog would want to show him to Mr. Man, and that he was too heavy for Mr. Dog to carry. He had thought about all that, and decided what to do just in that little second between the limb and the ground, for Mr. 'Possum can think quick enough when anything like that happens.

So when he struck the ground he just gave one little kick with his hind foot and a kind of a sigh, as if he was drawing his last breath, and laid there: and even when Mr. Dog grabbed him and shook him he never let on, but acted almost deader than if he had been really dead and no mistake.

Then Mr. Dog stood with his paws out and his nose down close, listening, and barking once in a while, and thinking maybe he would come to pretty soon, but Mr. 'Possum still never let on, or breathed the least little bit, and directly Mr. Dog started to drag him toward Mr. Man's house.

That was a hard job, and every little way Mr. Dog would stop and shake Mr. 'Possum and bark and listen to see if he was really dead, and after a while he decided that he was, and started to get Mr. Man to come and fetch Mr. 'Possum home. But he only went a few steps, the first time, and just as Mr. 'Possum was about to jump up and run he came hurrying back, and stood over him and barked and barked as loud as ever he could for Mr. Man to come and see what he had for him. But Mr. Man was too far away, and even if he heard Mr. Dog he didn't think it worth while to come.

So then Mr. Dog tried to get Mr. 'Possum on his shoulder, to carry him that way; but Mr. 'Possum made himself so limp and loose and heavy that every time Mr. Dog would get him nearly up he would slide off again and fall all in a heap on the leaves; and Mr. Dog couldn't help believing that he was dead, to see him lying there all doubled up, just as he happened to drop.

So, then, by-and-by Mr. Dog really did start for Mr. Man's, and Mr. 'Possum lay still, and just opened one eye the least

SO THEN MR. DOG TRIED TO GET MR. 'POSSUM ON HIS SHOULDER

bit to see how far Mr. Dog had gone, and when he had gone far enough Mr. 'Possum jumped up quick as a wink and scampered up a tree, and ran out on a limb and swung with his head down, and called out:

"Don't go away, Mr. Dog! We've had such a nice visit together! Don't go off mad, Mr. Dog! Come back and stay till the cows come home!"

Then Mr. Dog was mad, I *tell* you, and told him what he'd do next time; and he set out for home fast as he could travel, and went in the back way and hid, for Mr. Man was already getting up the cows when he got there.

Well, Mr. 'Possum didn't try that swinging trick on Mr. Dog any more. He found out that it was dangerous, the way he was getting, and that made him think he ought to change his habits in other ways too. For one thing, he decided he ought to have some regular place to stay where he could eat and sleep and feel at home, instead of just travelling about and putting up for the night wherever he happened to be.

Mr. 'Possum was always quite stylish, too, and had a good many nice clothes, and it wasn't good for them to be packed about all the time; and once some of his best things got rained on and he had to sleep on them for a long time to get them pressed out smooth again.

So Mr. 'Possum made up his mind to find a home. He

was an old bachelor and never wanted to be anything else, because he liked to have his own way, and go out all times of the night, and sleep late if he wanted to. So he made up his mind to look up a good place to board—some place that would be like a home to him—perhaps in a private family.

One day when he was walking through the woods thinking about it, and wondering how he ought to begin to find a place like that, he met Mr. Z. 'Coon, who was one of his oldest friends in the Big Deep Woods. They had often been hunting together, especially nights, for Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum always like that time best for hunting, and have better luck in the dark than any other time. Mr. 'Coon had had his troubles with Mr. Dog, too, and had come very near getting caught one night when Mr. Man and some of his friends were out with Mr. Dog and his relatives and several guns looking for a good Sunday dinner. Mr. 'Coon *would* have got caught that time, only when Mr. Man cut the tree down that he was in he gave a big jump as the tree was falling and landed in another tree, and then ran out on a limb and jumped to another tree that wasn't so far away, and then to another, so that Mr. Man and his friends and all the dog family lost track of him entirely.

But Mr. 'Coon was tired of that kind of thing too, and

HE WAS AN OLD BACHELOR AND LIKED TO HAVE HIS OWN WAY

wanted some place where he could be comfortable, and where he could lock the door nights and feel safe. Mr. 'Coon was a bachelor, like Mr. 'Possum, though he had once been disappointed in love, and told about it sometimes, and looked sad, and even shed tears.

So when he met Mr. 'Possum that day they walked along and talked about finding a place to live, and just as they were wondering what they ought to do they happened to notice, right in front of them, a little piece of birch bark tacked up on a tree, and when they read it, it said:

MRS. WIDOW CROW.
WILL TAKE A FEW GUESTS.
SINGLE GENTLEMEN PREFERRED;
PLEASANT LOCATION NEAR
RACE-TRACK.

Then Mr. 'Possum scratched his head and tried to think, and Mr. 'Coon scratched *his* head and tried to think, and pretty soon Mr. 'Coon said:

"Oh yes, I know about that. That's Mr. Crow's mother-in-law. He had a wife until last year, and his mother-in-law used to live with them. I believe she was pretty cross, but I've heard Mr. Crow say she was a good cook, and that he had learned to cook a great many things himself. I

THEY SAW MR. CROW OUT IN THE YARD CUTTING WOOD FOR HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW

heard some time ago that she had moved over by the race-track, and perhaps Mr. Crow is boarding with her. Let's go over and see."

So away they went, saying how nice it would be to be really settled, and pretty soon they got over to Mrs. Widow Crow's, and there, sure enough, they saw Mr. Crow out in the yard cutting wood for his mother-in-law; and when they asked him about the advertisement, he said he was helping her to get started, and she had two nice rooms, and that Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon would be just the ones to fill them.

So they went right in and saw Mrs. Widow Crow about it, and by night they had their things moved and were all settled, and Widow Crow got a nice supper for them, and Mr. Crow helped her, and worked as hard as if he were a hired man instead of a boarder like the others, which he was, because he paid for his room as much as anybody, and got scolded besides when he didn't do things to suit his mother-in-law.

THE FINDING OF THE HOLLOW TREE

THE FINDING OF THE HOLLOW TREE

HOW THE 'COON AND 'POSSUM AND THE OLD BLACK CROW MOVED AND SET UP HOUSEKEEPING

WELL, the Widow Crow set a very good table, and everything in her boarding-house went along quite well for a while, and Mr. 'Possum and Mr.' Coon both said what a good thing it was to have a home, and Mr. Crow said so too, though he didn't look as if he enjoyed t as much as he said, for his mother-in-law kept him so busy cutting and carrying wood and helping her with the cooking that he never had any time for himself at all.

Even when Mr. Rabbit and some of his friends had the great fall handicap race he had to stay at home and peel potatoes, and not see it, besides being scolded all the time for wanting to go to such a thing as a rabbit race anyway. And Mr. Crow was sad because it reminded him of his

married life, which he was trying to forget—Mrs. Crow having been the image of his mother-in-law and exactly like her about races and peeling potatoes and such things.

And by-and-by, Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon didn't like it so much, either. Widow Crow got so she scolded them, too, about their habits, especially about being out nights and lying in bed next morning, and she wouldn't give them any breakfast unless they got up in time.

At last she even asked them to take care of their own rooms and to do other work, the same as Mr. Crow did; and she didn't cook as good things, nor as many of them, as she did when they first came. Then one day when they complained a little—not very much, for they were afraid of the Widow Crow, but a little—she told them that if they didn't like what she gave them they could find a place they liked better, and that she was tired of their ways anyhow.

So then Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum all got together and talked it over. And Mr. Crow said *they* might be pretty tired of it, but that they couldn't in a hundred years, thinking night and day, think how tired of it *he* was. He said if they would just say the word he would take the things that belonged to him out of that house, and the three of them would find some good place and all live together, and never have anything more to do with mothers-in-law or their families. He said he knew how to cook as

HAD TO STAY AT HOME AND PEEL POTATOES

well as she did, and really liked to cook when he was in a pleasant place and wasn't henpecked to death.

And he said if they moved his things they had better do it at night while his mother-in-law was asleep, so as not to disturb her.

Well, Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon both spoke right up and said *they'd* go in a minute, and that they'd hunt up the place to live that very day, though it wasn't the best time of year to move. And Mr. Crow said:

"I know where there's a big Hollow Tree that would be *just* the place. It's the biggest tree in the Big Deep Woods. It has three big hollow branches that would do for rooms, and with a little work it could be made into the finest place anywhere. The Old Wise Man of the Woods once lived there and fixed it all up with nice stairs, and a fireplace, and windows, and doors with good latches on them, and it's still just as he left it. All it needs are a few repairs, and we could move right in. I found it once as I was flying over, and I could tell *you*, so you could find it. It's in a thick swampy place, and you would never guess it was there if you didn't know it. Mr. Dog knows about it, but he never could get in if we kept the door latched, and it's not so far away from Mr. Man's that we could not borrow, when we ran out of little things we needed."

Well, Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon took the directions

from Mr. Crow, and went right off to look at the Hollow Tree that very day, and decided they'd take it, and pitched in to clean it up and get it ready to live in. And next day they came with a hammer and some nails and worked all day again, and Mr. Rabbit heard the noise and came over and looked through the place and said how nice it was; and they were so tired at night that they never thought of going out, and were up early for breakfast.

Widow Crow was so surprised she forgot what she had always scolded them for before, and scolded them this time for getting up so early that they had to stand around and wait for breakfast to be put on the table. But they didn't seem to mind the scolding at all, and Mr. Crow looked happier than he had looked for months, and skipped around and helped set the table, and brought in a big wood-box full of wood, and when Widow Crow scolded him for getting chips on the floor he laughed. Then she boxed his ears and told him he ought to remember the poor Missing One at such a time, and Mr. Crow said he did, and could almost imagine she was there now.

Well, Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum got the Hollow Tree all ready, that day, and that night they moved.

The Widow Crow was pretty fat, and liked to go to bed early, and sleep sound, and leave Mr. Crow to do the evening dishes; and that evening Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum

pitched in and helped him, and they got through in a jiffy and began to move.

Mr. Crow said he knew his own things, and that he wouldn't take any that belonged to the Missing One, because they had mostly come from her mother; and, besides, they would be a sad reminder, and didn't seem to go with the kind of a place they had planned to have. He said if they didn't have enough things they could borrow a few from Mr. Man when Mr. Man went away and left his windows open, and that they wouldn't need much to begin with.

So then they got Mr. Crow's cook-stove out of the back store-room, and a table that was his, and some chairs from different parts of the house, and a few dishes which had come to him from his side of the family, and they tiptoed around and listened now and then at Widow Crow's door to be sure she was asleep.

They knew she *was* by the sound; but still they were very quiet until Mr. 'Possum started to bring a rocking-chair of Mr. Crow's down-stairs and somehow got his legs through the rounds and fell and rolled clear to the bottom, expressing his feelings as he came down.

That woke up Widow Crow with a jump, and she sat up in bed and called "Thieves!" and "Help!" and Mr. Crow ran to her door and said that it wasn't anything, only those scamps Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon had been out late again.

LISTENED NOW AND THEN AT WIDOW CROW'S DOOR TO BE SURE SHE WAS ASLEEP

He said they had brought home one of Mr. Man's beehives and had dropped it because the bees woke up just as they were climbing the stairs.

Then Mrs. Crow called out quick, and said for him not to dare to open that door and let those pesky bees into her room, and that she hoped they'd sting that 'Possum and 'Coon until they wouldn't be able to tell themselves apart. She said she bet she'd get that pair out of her house if she lived through the night. Then she rolled over and went to sleep again, and Mr. 'Possum got up and limped a little, but wasn't much damaged, and they got all the things outside and loaded up, and set out for the Hollow Tree.

It was moonlight and Mr. Crow led the way, and the minute they were far enough off to be sure they wouldn't wake up Widow Crow they sang the chorus of a song that Mr. Rabbit had made for them the day before when he called at the Hollow Tree, and they had told him what they were going to do. That was the "Hollow Tree Song," which, of course, everybody in the Big Deep Woods knows now, but it had never been sung there before, and when they joined in the chorus,

Then here's to the 'Possum and the Old Black Crow
And the 'Coon with a one, two, three!
And here's to the hollow, hollow, hollow, hollow, hollow—
Then here's to the Hollow Tree,

MR. 'POSSUM SAID HE'D JUST GET ON AND HOLD THE THINGS

Mr. Owl, who was watching them from a limb overhead, thought he had never heard anything quite so fine.

Well, they couldn't get along very fast, for the things got so heavy and they had to rest so often that it began to look as if they wouldn't get to the Hollow Tree by morning. But just as they got out into a little open place that was about half-way there they saw somebody coming, and who do you suppose it was?

"I know," says the Little Lady, "it was the Old Wise Man of the Woods, to tell them they couldn't have his house."

No, he didn't live there any more—he had gone away for good. No, it wasn't the Old Wise Man; it was Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Turtle, coming to help them move. Mr. Rabbit had gone all the way to the Wide Blue Water after Mr. Turtle because he is so strong, and they would have been there a good deal sooner, only Mr. Turtle didn't get home till late, and travels slow.

Well, it wasn't so hard to move after that. They just set the cook-stove on Mr. Turtle's back and piled on as much as would stay on, and he kept telling them to put on more, until pretty soon Mr. 'Possum said that he would just get on and hold the things from slipping off, which he did, and sat on the stove and rode and swung his feet and held the other things, while Mr. Crow and the rest walked and carried what was left.

MR. 'POSSUM AND MR. 'COON TRIED TO PUT UP THE STOVE

And when they got to the Hollow Tree it was just about sun-up, and Mr. 'Possum said if they didn't have breakfast pretty soon he would starve to death with being up all night and working so hard holding on those things.

So then Mr. Crow told him that he and Mr. 'Coon could set up the stove, and that he would unpack the food and stir up something as quick as he could if the others would bring a little wood and some water from the spring, and place the things around inside; for he saw a cloud coming, he said, and it might rain. And Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon tried to put up the stove in a hurry, and the pieces of pipe didn't fit very well, and they came as near having a quarrel over it as they ever did over anything, for even the best friends can't always put up stovepipe together without thinking and sometimes saying unpleasant things about each other, especially when they are hungry and not very warm and the house is all upset. Mr. 'Coon said he only wished he had another hand and he would do that job alone, and Mr. 'Possum told him that if he'd been provided with a handy and useful tail he'd *have* the same as another hand, and could work more and not wish so much.

Then Mr. Rabbit came to help them, and just as they got it about up it all came down again, and Mr. Crow said that if they'd all go away he'd set up the stove himself; which

he did in about a minute, and had a fire in it and the coffee on in no time.

Then the others rushed around and got the things straightened out, and a fire in the fireplace, and they said how nice their rooms were, and when Mr. Crow called they all came hurrying down, and in about another minute the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow, with Mr. Rabbit and Mr. Turtle, all sat down to the first meal in the Hollow Tree.

It was then that Jack Rabbit read all of the "Hollow Tree Song" he had made for them, and they all sang it together; and then the storm that Mr. Crow had seen coming did come, and they shut all the doors and windows tight, and sat before the fire and smoked and went to sleep, because they were so tired with being up all night.

And that was the first day in the Hollow Tree, and how the 'Possum and 'Coon and Old Black Crow came to live there, and they live there still.

THE THIRD SNOWED-IN STORY

THE THIRD SNOWED-IN STORY

MR. RABBIT TELLS SOME INTERESTING FAMILY HISTORY

THE Little Lady waited until the Story Teller had lit his pipe and sat looking into the great open fire, where there was a hickory log so big that it had taken the Story Teller and the Little Lady's mother with two pairs of ice-tongs to drag it to the hearth and get it into place. Pretty soon the Little Lady had crept in between the Story Teller's knees. Then in another minute she was on one of his knees, helping him rock. Then she said:

"Did Mr. Rabbit tell his story next? He promised to tell about losing his tail, you know."

The Story Teller took his pipe from his mouth a moment, and sat thinking and gazing at the big log, which perhaps reminded him of one of the limbs of the Hollow Tree, where the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow lived and had their friends visit them that long-ago snowy Christmas-time.

"Why, yes," he said, "that's so," Mr. Rabbit *did* tell that story. When Mr. 'Coon got through telling how he came near getting into a menagerie, they all said that it certainly was a very narrow escape, and Mr. 'Coon said he shouldn't wonder if that menagerie had to quit business, just because he wasn't in it; and Mr. 'Possum said he thought if anything would *save* a menagerie that would, for it would keep them from being eaten out of house and home."

Then Mr. 'Coon said that if that was so, Mr. 'Possum had saved at least three menageries by staying right where he was in the Big Deep Woods. This made Mr. Squirrel and Mr. Robin laugh, and the rest wondered what those two gigglers had noticed that was funny. Then they all knocked the ashes out of their pipes again, and walked over to the window, and looked at the snow banking up outside and piling up on the bare limbs of the big trees. They said how early it got dark this time of year, especially on a cloudy day. And pretty soon Mr. Crow said they had just about time for one more story before supper, and that Mr. Rabbit ought to tell now about how, a long time ago, his family had lost their tails. Mr. Rabbit didn't seem to feel very anxious to tell it, but they told him that he had promised, and that now was as good a time as any, so they went back and sat down, and Mr. Rabbit told them

THE TRUE STORY OF THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE, AND HOW JACK RABBIT LOST HIS TAIL

"Once upon a time," he said, "a great many great-grandfathers back, my family had long bushy tails, like Mr. Squirrel and Mr. Fox, only a good deal longer and finer and softer, and *very handsome*."

When Mr. Rabbit said that, Mr. Squirrel sniffed and twitched his nose and gave his nice bushy tail a flirt, but he didn't say anything. Mr. Rabbit went right on.

"Well, there was one fine, handsome rabbit who had the longest and plumiest tail of any of the family, and was very proud of it. He was my twenty-seventh great-grandfather, and was called 'Mr. Hare.' He was young and smart then, and thought he was a good deal smarter than he really was, though he was smart enough and handsome enough to set the style for all the other rabbits, and not much ever happened to him, because he could beat anything running that there was in the Big Deep Woods.

"That twenty-seventh great-grandfather of mine was very proud of his running, and used to brag that in a foot-race he could beat anything that lived between the Wide Grass Lands and the Edge of the World. He used to talk about it to almost everybody that came along, and one day when he met one of the Turtle family who used to be called 'Mr.

Tortoise' in those days, he stopped and began to brag to him how fast he could run and how nobody in the Big Deep Woods dared to race with him.

"But Mr. Turtle, he just smiled a little and said: 'Oh, pshaw! you can't run very fast. I believe I can beat you myself!'

"Well, that did make Grandfather Hare laugh—and made him a little mad, too.

"'You!' he said. 'Why, I'll give you within ten yards of that rail fence of Mr. Man's, half a mile away, and then beat you across it. Just travel along, and some time this afternoon, when you get down that way, I'll come back and let you see me go by. But you'll have to look quick if you see me, for I'll be going fast.'

"But Mr. Tortoise said he didn't want any start at all, that he was ready to begin the race right then; and that made Grandpaw Hare laugh so loud that Mr. Fox heard him as he was passing, and came over to see what the fun was. Then he said that he hadn't much to do for a few minutes, and that he'd stay and act as judge. He thought a race like that wouldn't last long; and it didn't, though it wasn't at all the kind of a race he had expected.

"Well, he put Mr. Tortoise and my twenty-seventh great-grandfather side by side, and then he stood off and said, 'Go!' and thought it would all be over in a minute.

MR. FOX SAID HE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TO DO FOR A FEW MINUTES AND HE'D ACT AS JUDGE

"Grandpaw Hare gave one great big leap, about twenty feet long, and then stopped. He was in no hurry, and he wanted to have some fun with Mr. Tortoise. He looked around to where Mr. Tortoise was coming straddling and panting along, and he laughed and rolled over to see how solemn he looked, and how he was travelling as if he meant to get somewhere before dark. He was down on all fours so he could use all his legs at once, and anybody would think, to look at him, that he really expected to win that race.

"The more my Grandpaw Hare looked at him the more he laughed, and then he would make another long leap forward and stop, and look back, and wait for Mr. Tortoise to catch up again.

"Then he would call to him, or maybe go back and take roundin's on him, and say, 'Come along there, old tobacco-box. Are you tied to something?' Mr. Fox would laugh a good deal, too, and he told my ancestor to go on and finish the race—that he couldn't wait around there all day. And pretty soon he said if they were going to fool along like that, he'd just go down to the fence and take a nap till they got there; and for Grandpaw Rabbit to call to him when he really started to come, so he could wake up and judge the finish.

"Mr. Fox he loped away to the fence and laid down and went to sleep in the shade, and Grandpaw Hare thought

it would be fun to pretend to be asleep, too. I've heard a story told about it that says that he really did go to sleep, and that Mr. Tortoise went by him and got to the fence before he woke up. But that is not the way it happened. My twenty-seventh great-grandfather was too smart to go to sleep, and even if he had gone to sleep, Mr. Tortoise made enough noise pawing and scratching along through the grass and gravel to wake up forty of our family.

"My ancestor would wait until he came grinding along and got up even with him, then suddenly he'd sit up as if he'd been waked out of a nice dream and say, 'Hello, old coffee-mill! What do you want to wake me up for when I'm trying to get a nap?' Then he would laugh a big laugh and make another leap, and lie down and pretend again, with his fine plumy tail very handsome in the sun.

"But Grandpaw Hare carried the joke a little too far. He kept letting Mr. Tortoise get up a little closer and closer every time, until Mr. Tortoise would almost step on him before he would move. And that was just what Mr. Tortoise wanted, for about the next time he came along he came right up behind my ancestor, but instead of stepping on him, he gave his head a quick snap, just as if he were catching fish, and grabbed my Grandpaw Hare by that beautiful plumy tail, and held on, and pinched, and my ancestor gave

a squeal and a holler and set out for that rail fence, telling his troubles as he came.

"Mr. Fox had gone sound asleep and didn't hear the rumpus at first, and when he did, he thought grandpaw was just calling to him to wake up and be ready to judge the race, so he sat up quick and watched them come. He saw my twenty-seventh great-grandfather sailing along, just touching the highest points, with something that looked like an old black wash-pan tied to his tail.

"When Mr. Fox saw what it was, he just laid down and laughed and rolled over, and then hopped up on the top rail and called, out 'All right, I'm awake, Mr. Hare! Come right along, Mr. Hare; you'll beat him yet!'

"Then he saw my ancestor stop and shake himself, and paw, and roll over, to try to get Mr. Tortoise loose, which of course he couldn't do, for, as we all know, whenever any of the Turtle family get a grip they never let go till it thunders, and this was a bright day. So pretty soon grandpaw was up and running again with Mr. Tortoise sailing out behind and Mr. Fox laughing to see them come, and calling out: 'Come right along, Mr. Hare! come right along! You'll beat him yet!'

"But Mr. Fox made a mistake about that. Grandpaw Hare was really ahead, of course, when he came down the homestretch, but when he got pretty close to the fence he

SAILING ALONG, JUST TOUCHING THE HIGHEST POINTS

made one more try to get Mr. Tortoise loose, and gave himself and his tail a great big swing, and Mr. Tortoise didn't let go quite quick enough, and off came my twenty-seventh great-grandfather's beautiful plumy tail, and away went Mr. Tortoise with it, clear over the top rail of the fence, and landed in a brier patch on the other side.

"Well, Grandpaw Hare was in such a state as you never heard of! He forgot all about the race at first, and just raved about his great loss, and borrowed Mr. Fox's handkerchief to tie up what was left, and said that he never in the world could show his face before folks again.

"And Mr. Fox stopped laughing as soon as he could, and was really quite sorry for him, and even Mr. Tortoise looked through the fence, and asked him if he didn't think it could be spliced and be almost as good as ever.

"He said he hadn't meant to commit any damage, and that he hoped Mr. Hare would live to forgive him, and that now there was no reason why my grandpaw shouldn't beat him in the next race.

"Then my ancestor remembered about the race and forgot his other loss for a minute, and declared that Mr. Tortoise didn't win the race at all—that he couldn't have covered that much ground in a half a day alone, and he asked Mr. Fox if he was going to let that great straddle-bug ruin his reputation for speed and make him the laughing-stock of

AWAY WENT MR. TORTOISE, CLEAR OVER THE TOP RAIL

the Big Deep Woods, besides all the other damage he had done.

"Then Mr. Fox scratched his head, and thought about it, and said he didn't see how he could help giving the race to Mr. Tortoise, for it was to be the first one across the fence, and that Mr. Tortoise was certainly the first one across, and that he'd gone over the top rail in style.

"Well, that made Grandpaw Hare madder than ever. He didn't say another word, but just picked up his property that Mr. Tortoise handed him through the fence, and set out for home by a back way, studying what he ought to do to keep everybody from laughing at him, and thinking that if he didn't do something he'd have to leave the country or drown himself, for he had always been so proud that if people laughed at him he knew he could never show his face again.

"And that," said Mr. Rabbit, "is the true story of that old race between the Hare and the Tortoise, and of how the first Rabbit came to lose his tail. I've never told it before, and none of my family ever did; but so many stories have been told about the way those things happened that we might just as well have this one, which is the only true one so far as I know."

Then Mr. Rabbit lit his pipe and leaned back and smoked. Mr. Dog said it was a fine story, and he wished he could

SET OUT FOR HOME BY A BACK WAY

have seen that race, and Mr. Turtle looked as if he wanted to say something, and did open his mouth to say it, but Mr. Crow spoke up, and asked what happened after that to Mr. Rabbit's twenty-seventh great-grandfather, and how it was that the rest of the Rabbits had short tails, too.

Then Mr. Rabbit said that that was another story, and Mr. Squirrel and Mr. Robin wanted him to tell it right away, but Mr. Crow said they'd better have supper now, and Mr. 'Possum thought that was a good plan, and Mr. 'Coon, too, and then they all hurried around to get up some sticks of wood from down-stairs, and to set the table, and everybody helped, so they could get through early and have a nice long evening.

And all the time the snow was coming down outside and piling higher and higher, and they were being snowed in without knowing it, for it was getting too dark to see much when they tried again to look out the window through the gloom of the Big Deep Woods.

THE FOURTH SNOWED-IN STORY

THE FOURTH SNOWED-IN STORY

MR. JACK RABBIT CONTINUES HIS FAMILY HISTORY

"DID they have enough left for supper—enough for all the visitors, I mean?" asks the Little Lady the next evening, when the Story Teller is ready to go on with the history of the Hollow Tree.

"Oh yes, they had plenty for supper, and more, too. They had been getting ready a good while for just such a time as this, and had carried in a lot of food, and they had a good many nice things down in the store-room where the wood was, but they didn't need those yet. They just put on what they had left from their big dinner, and Mr. Crow stirred up a pan of hot biscuits by his best receipt, and they passed them back and forth across the table so much that Mr. 'Possum said they went like hot cakes, sure enough, and always took two when they came his way."

And they talked a good deal about the stories that Mr. 'Coon and Mr. Rabbit had told them, and everybody thought how sly and smart Mr. 'Coon had been to fool Mr. Dog that way; and Mr. 'Coon said that, now he came to think it over, he supposed it was a pretty good trick, though it really hadn't seemed so specially great to him at the time. He said he didn't think it half as smart as Mr. Tortoise's trick on Mr. Rabbit's Grandpaw Hare, when he beat him in the foot-race and went over the fence first, taking Mr. Hare's tail with him. And then they wondered if that had all really happened as Mr. Rabbit had told it—all but Mr. Turtle, who just sat and smiled to himself and didn't say anything at all, except "Please pass the biscuits," now and then, when he saw the plate being set down in front of Mr. 'Possum.

Then by-and-by they all got through and hurried up and cleared off the table, and lit their pipes, and went back to the fire, and pretty soon Jack Rabbit began to tell

HOW THE REST OF THE RABBITS LOST THEIR TAILS

"Well," he said, "my twenty-seventh great-grandfather Hare didn't go out again for several days. He put up a sign that said 'Not at Home,' on his door, and then tried a few experiments, to see what could be done.

TRIED TO SPLICE HIS PROPERTY BACK IN PLACE

"He first tried to splice his property back into place, as Mr. Tortoise had told him he might, but that plan didn't work worth a cent. He never could get it spliced on straight, and if he did get it about right, it would lop over or sag down or something as soon as he moved, and when he looked at himself in the glass he made up his mind that he'd rather do without his nice plumy brush altogether than to go out into society with it in that condition.

"So he gave it up and put on some nice all-healing ointment, and before long what there was left of it was all well, and a nice bunch of soft, white cottony fur had grown out over the scar, and Grandpaw Hare thought when he looked at himself in the glass that it was really quite becoming, though he knew the rest of his family would always be saying things about it, and besides they would laugh at him for letting Mr. Tortoise beat him in a foot-race.

"Sometimes, when there was nobody around, my grandfather would go out into the sun and light his pipe and lean up against a big stone, or maybe a stump, and think it over.

"And one morning, as he sat there thinking, he made up his mind what he would do. Mr. Lion lived in the Big Deep Woods in those days, and he was King. Whenever anything happened among the Deep Woods People that they couldn't decide for themselves, they went to where King Lion lived, in a house all by himself over by the Big

GRANDFATHER WOULD LIGHT HIS PIPE AND THINK IT OVER

West Hills, and he used to settle the question; and sometimes, when somebody that wasn't very old, and maybe was plump and tender, had done something that wasn't just right, King Lion would look at him and growl and say it was too bad for any one so young to do such things, and especially for them to grow up and keep on doing them; so he would have him for breakfast, or maybe for dinner, and that would settle everything in the easiest and shortest way.

"Of course Grandfather Hare knew very well that Mr. Tortoise and Mr. Fox wouldn't go with him to King Lion, for they would be afraid to, after what they had done, so he made up his mind to go alone and tell him the whole story, because he was as sure as anything that King Lion would decide that he had really won the race, and would be his friend, which would make all the other Deep Woods People jealous and proud of him again, and perhaps make them wish they had nice bunches of white cottony fur in the place of long dragging tails that were always in the way.

"And then some day he would show King Lion where Mr. Fox and Mr. Tortoise lived.

"My Grandfather Hare didn't stop a minute after he thought of that, but just set out for King Lion's house over at the foot of the Big West Hills. He had to pass by Mr. Fox's house, and Mr. Fox called to him, but Grandpaw

SET UP HIS EARS AND WENT BY, LICKETY-SPLIT

Hare just set up his ears as proud as could be and went by, lickety-split, without looking at Mr. Fox at all.

"It was a good way to King Lion's house, but Grandpaw Hare didn't waste any time, and he was there almost before he knew it.

"When he got to King Lion's door he hammered on the knocker, and when nobody came right away he thought maybe the King was out for a walk. But that wasn't so. King Lion had been sick for two or three days, and he was still in bed, and had to get up and get something around him before he could let Grandpaw in.

"Grandpaw Hare had sat down on the steps to wait, when all at once the door opened behind him and he felt something grab him by the collar and swing him in and set him down hard on a seat, and then he saw it was King Lion, and he didn't much like his looks.

"'So it was you, was it, making that noise?' he said. 'Well, I'm glad to see you, for I was just thinking about having a nice rabbit for breakfast.'

"Then my twenty-seventh great-grandfather knew he'd made a mistake, coming to see King Lion when he was feeling that way, and he had to think pretty quick to know what to say. But our family have always been pretty quick in their thoughts, and Grandpaw Hare spoke right up as polite as could be, and said he would do anything he could

"'GLAD TO SEE YOU,' SAID KING LION; 'I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT HAVING A NICE RABBIT FOR BREAKFAST'"

to find a nice young plump rabbit for King Lion, and that he would even be proud to be a king's breakfast himself, only he wasn't so very young nor so very plump, and, besides, there was that old prophecy about the king and the cotton-tailed rabbit, which of course, he said, King Lion must have heard about.

"Then King Lion said that my twenty-seventh great-grandfather was plenty young enough and plenty plump enough, and that he'd never heard of any prophecy about a cotton-tailed rabbit, and that he'd never heard of a cotton-tailed rabbit, either.

"Then Grandpaw Hare just got up and turned around, and as he turned he said, as solemnly as he could:

> 'When the King eats a hare with a cotton tail,
> Then the King's good health will fail.'

"Well, that scared the King a good deal, for he was just getting over one sick spell, and he was afraid if he had another right away he'd die sure. He sat down and asked Grandpaw Hare to tell him how he came to have a tail like that, and grandpaw told him, and it made the King laugh and laugh, until he got well, and he said it was the best joke he ever heard of, and that he'd have given some of the best ornaments off of his crown to have seen that race.

"And the better King Lion felt the hungrier he got, and

when my Grandfather Hare asked him if he wouldn't decide the race in his favor, he just glared at him and said if he didn't get out of there and hunt him up a nice, young, plump, long-tailed rabbit, he'd eat him—cotton tail, prophecy, and all—for he didn't go much on prophecies anyway.

"Then Grandpaw Hare got right up and said, 'Good-day' and backed out and made tracks for the rest of his family, and told them that King Lion had just got up from a sick spell that had given him an appetite for long-tailed rabbits. He said that the King had sent him out to get one, and that King Lion would most likely be along himself pretty soon. He said the sooner the Rabbit family took pattern after the new cotton-tailed style the more apt they'd be to live to a green old age and have descendants.

"Well, that was a busy day in the Big Deep Woods. The Rabbit family got in line by a big smooth stump that they picked out for the purpose, and grandpaw attended to the job for them, and called out 'Next!' as they marched by. He didn't have to wait, either, for they didn't know what minute King Lion might come. Mr. Tortoise and Mr. Fox came along and stopped to see the job, and helped grandpaw now and then when his arm got tired, and by evening there was a pile of tails by that stump as big as King Lion's house, and there never was such a call for

the all-healing ointment as there was that night in the Big Deep Woods.

"And none of our family ever did have tails after that, for they never would grow any more, and all the little new rabbits just had bunches of cotton, too, and that has never changed to this day.

"And when King Lion heard how he'd been fooled by Grandpaw Hare with that foolish prophecy that he just made up right there, out of his head, he knew that everybody would laugh at him as much as he had laughed at Mr. Hare, and he moved out of the country and never came back, and there's never been a king in the Big Deep Woods since, so my twenty-seventh great-grandfather did some good, after all.

"And that," said Mr. Rabbit, "is the whole story of the Hare and the Tortoise and how the Rabbit family lost their tails. It's never been told outside of our family before, but it's true, for it's been handed down, word for word, and if Mr. Fox or Mr. Tortoise were alive now they would say so."

Mr. Rabbit filled his pipe and lit it, and Mr. Crow was just about to make some remarks, when Mr. Turtle cleared his throat and said:

"The story that Mr. Rabbit has been telling is all true, every word of it—I was there."

Then all the Deep Woods People took their pipes out of

their mouths and just looked at Mr. Turtle with their mouths wide open, and when they could say anything at all, they said:

"*You were there!*"

You see, they could never get used to the notion of Mr. Turtle's being so old—as old as their twenty-seventh great-grandfathers would have been, if they had lived.

"Yes," said Mr. Turtle, "and it all comes back to me as plain as day. It happened two hundred and fifty-eight years ago last June. They used to call us the Tortoise family then, and I was a young fellow of sixty-seven and fond of a joke. But I was surprised when I went sailing over that fence, and I didn't mean to carry off Mr. Hare's tail. Dear me, how time passes! I'm three hundred and twenty-five now, though I don't feel it."

Then they all looked at Mr. Turtle again, for though they believed he was old, and might possibly have been there, they thought it pretty strange that he could be the very Mr. Tortoise who had won the race.

Mr. 'Possum said, pretty soon, that when anybody said a thing like that, there ought to be some way to prove it.

Then Mr. Turtle got up and began taking off his coat, and all the others began to get out of the way, for they didn't know what was going to happen to Mr. 'Possum, and they wanted to be safe; and Mr. 'Possum rolled under the table,

and said that he didn't mean anything — that he loved Mr. Turtle, and that Mr. Turtle hadn't understood the way he meant it at all.

But Mr. Turtle wasn't the least bit mad. He just laid off his coat, quietly, and unbuttoned his shirt collar, and told Mr. 'Coon and Mr. Crow to look on the back of his shell.

And then Mr. Dog held a candle, and they all looked, one after another, and there, sure enough, carved right in Mr. Turtle's shell, were the words:

BEAT MR. HARE
FOOT-RACE
JUNE 10, 1649

"That," said Mr. Turtle, "was my greatest joke, and I had it carved on my shell."

And all the rest of the forest people said that a thing like that was worth carving on anybody's shell that had one, and when Mr. Turtle put on his coat they gave him the best seat by the fire, and sat and looked at him and asked questions about it, and finally all went to sleep in their chairs, while the fire burned low and the soft snow was banking up deeper and deeper, outside, in the dark.

THE "SNOWED-IN" LITERARY CLUB

THE "SNOWED-IN" LITERARY CLUB

MR. RABBIT PROPOSES SOMETHING TO PASS THE TIME

"DID the Hollow Tree People and their company sleep in their chairs all night?" asks the Little Lady, as soon as she has finished her supper. "And were they snowed in when they woke up next morning?"

The Story Teller is not quite ready to answer. He has to fill his pipe first, and puff a little and look into the fire before he sits down, and the Little Lady climbs into her place. The Little Lady knows the Story Teller, and waits. When he begins to rock a little she knows he has remembered, and then pretty soon he tells her about the "Snowed-In" Literary Club.

Well, the Hollow Tree People went to sleep there by the fire and they stayed asleep a long while, for they were tired

with all the good times and all the good things to eat they had been having. And when they woke up once, they thought it was still night, for it was dark, though they thought it must be about morning, because the fire was nearly out, and Mr. 'Possum said if there was anybody who wasn't too stiff he wished they'd put on a stick of wood, as he was frozen so hard that he knew if he tried to move he'd break.

So Mr. Turtle, who had been drawn up mostly into his shell, and Mr. Dog, who was used to getting up at all hours of the night, stretched and yawned and crept down after some sticks and dry pieces and built up a good fire, and pretty soon they were all asleep again, as sound as ever.

And when they woke up next time it was still just as dark, and the fire had gone almost out again, and Mr. 'Coon and Mr. Crow, too, said they didn't understand it, at all, for a fire like that would generally keep all night and all day too, and here two fires had burned out and it was still as dark as ever. Then Mr. Crow lit a splinter and looked at the clock, and said he must have forgotten to wind it, or maybe it was because it was so cold, as it had stopped a little after twelve, and Mr. 'Possum said that from the way he felt it was no wonder the clock had stopped, for if he could tell anything by his feelings it must be at least day after to-morrow. He said he felt so empty that every time

he breathed he could hear the wind whistle through his ribs.

That made Mr. Rabbit think of something, and he stepped over to the window. Then he pushed it up a little, and put out his hand. But he didn't put it out far, for it went right into something soft and cold. Mr. Rabbit came over to where Mr. Crow was poking up the fire, bringing some of the stuff with him.

"Now," he said, "you can all see what's the matter. We're snowed in. The snow is up over the window, and that's why it's so dark. It may be up over the top of the tree, and we may have been asleep here for a week, for all we know."

Then they all gathered around to look at the snow, and went to the window and got some more, and tried to tell whether it was day or night, and Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum ran up-stairs to their rooms, and called back that it was day, for the snow hadn't come quite up to the tops of their windows.

And it *was* day, sure enough, and quite late in the afternoon at that, but they couldn't tell just what day it was, or whether they had slept one night, or two nights, or even longer.

Well, of course the first thing was to get something to eat and a big fire going, and even Mr. 'Possum scrambled

around and helped carry wood, so he could get warm quicker. They still had a good deal to eat in the Hollow Tree, and they were not much worried. Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon remembered another time they were snowed in, when Mr. Crow had fed them on Johnnie cake and gravy, and they thought that if everything else gave out it would be great fun to live like that again.

When they had finished eating breakfast, or dinner, or whatever it was, for it was nearer supper-time than anything else, they began to think of things to do to amuse themselves, and they first thought they'd have some more stories, like Mr. Rabbit's.

But Mr. Rabbit, who is quite literary, and a good poet, said it would be better to make it a kind of a club, and each have a poem, or a story, or a song; or if anybody couldn't do any of those he must dance a jig.

Then they all remembered a poetry club that Mr. Rabbit had got up once and how nice it was, and they all said that was just the thing, and they got around the table and began to work away at whatever they were going to do for the "Snowed-In" Literary Club.

Mr. Rabbit wasn't very long at his piece, and pretty soon he jumped up and said he was through, and Mr. 'Possum said that if that was so, he might go down and bring up some wood and warm up the brains of the rest of them. So Mr.

GOT AROUND THE TABLE AND BEGAN TO WORK

Rabbit stirred up the fire, and sat down and looked into it, and read over his poem to himself and changed a word here and there, and thought how nice it was; and by-and-by Mr. Dog said he was through, and Mr. Robin said he was through, too.

Then Mr. Rabbit said he thought that would be more than enough for one evening anyway, and that the others might finish their pieces to-morrow and have them ready for the next evening.

So then they all gathered around the fire again, and everybody said that as Mr. Rabbit had thought of the club first, he must be the first to read his piece.

Mr. Rabbit said he was sure it would be more modest for some one else to read first, but that he was willing to start things going if they wanted him to. Then he stood up, and turned a little to the light, and took a nice position, and read his poem, which was called

SNOWED IN

By J. Rabbit

Oh, the snow lies white in the woods to-night—
The snow lies soft and deep;
And under the snow, I know, oh, ho!
The flowers of the summer sleep.
The flowers of the summer sleep, I know,
Snowed in like you and me—

Under the sheltering leaves, oh, ho,
As snug and as warm as we—
As snug and as warm from the winter storm
As we of the Hollow Tree.
Snowed in are we in the Hollow Tree,
And as snug and as warm as they we be—
Snowed in, snowed in,
Are we, are we,
And as snug as can be in the Hollow Tree,
The wonderful Hollow Tree.

Oh, the snow lies cold on wood and wold,
But never a bit comes in,
As we smoke and eat, and warm our feet,
And sit by the fire and spin:
And what care we for the winter gales,
And what care we for the snow—
As we sit by the fire and spin our tales
And think of the things we know?
As we spin our tales in the winter gales
And wait for the snow to go?
Oh, the winds blow high and the winds blow low,
But what care we for the wind and snow,
Spinning our tales of the long ago
As snug as snug can be?
For never a bit comes in, comes in,
As we sit by the fire and spin, and spin
The tales we know, of the long ago,
In the wonderful Hollow Tree.

Mr. Rabbit sat down then, and of course everybody spoke up as soon as they could get their breath and said how nice it was, and how Mr. Rabbit always expressed himself better in poetry than anybody else could in prose, and how the words and rhymes just seemed to flow along as if he were reeling it off of a spinning-wheel and could keep it up all day.

And Mr. Rabbit smiled and said he supposed it came natural, and that sometimes it was harder to stop than it was to start, and that he *could* keep it up all day as easy as not.

Then Mr. 'Possum said he'd been afraid that was what *would* happen, and that if Mr. Rabbit hadn't stopped pretty soon that he—Mr. 'Possum, of course—would have been so tangled up in his mind that somebody would have had to come and undo the knot.

Then he said he wanted to ask some questions. He said he wanted to know what "wold" meant, and also what Mr. Rabbit meant by spinning their tails. He said he hadn't noticed that any of them were spinning their tails, and that he couldn't do it if he tried. He said that he could curl his tail and hang from a limb or a peg by it, and he had found it a good way to go to sleep when things were on his mind, and that he generally had better dreams when he slept that way.

MR. 'POSSUM WANTED TO KNOW WHAT MR. RABBIT MEANT BY SPINNING THEIR TAILS

He said that of course Mr. Rabbit's poem had been about tails of the long ago, and he supposed that he meant the ones which his family had lost about three hundred years ago, according to Mr. Turtle, but that he didn't believe they ever could spin them much, or that Mr. Rabbit could spin what he had left.

Mr. 'Possum was going on to say a good deal more on the subject, but Mr. Rabbit interrupted him.

He said he didn't suppose there was anybody else in the world whose food seemed to do him so little good as Mr. 'Possum's, and that very likely it was owing to the habit he had of sleeping with his head hanging down in that foolish way. He said he had never heard of anybody who ate so much and knew so little.

Of course, he said, everybody might not know what "wold" meant, as it wasn't used much except by poets who used the best words, but that it meant some kind of a field, and it was better for winter use, as it rhymed with "cold" and was nearly always used that way. As for Mr. 'Possum's other remark, he said he couldn't imagine how anybody would suppose that the tales he meant were those other tails which were made to wave or wag or flirt or hang from limbs by, instead of being stories to be told or written, just as the Deep Woods People were telling and writing them now. He said there was an old expression about having a peg

to hang a tale on, and that it was most likely gotten up by one of Mr. 'Possum's ancestors or somebody who knew as little about such things as Mr. 'Possum, and that another old expression which said "Thereby hangs a tale" was just like it, because the kind of tales he meant didn't hang, but were always told or written, while the other kind always did hang, and were never told or written, but were only sometimes told or written about, and it made him feel sad, he said, to have to explain his poem in that simple way.

Then Mr. 'Possum said that he was sorry Mr. Rabbit felt that way, because he didn't feel at all that way himself, and had only been trying to discuss Mr. Rabbit's nice poem. He said that of course Mr. Rabbit couldn't be expected to know much about tails, never having had a real one himself, and would be likely to get mixed up when he tried to write on the subject. He said he wouldn't mention such things again, and that he was sorry and hoped that Mr. Rabbit would forgive him.

And Mr. Rabbit said that he was sorry, too—sorry for Mr. 'Possum—and that he thought whoever was ready had better read the next piece.

Then Mr. Dog said that he supposed that he was as ready as he'd ever be, and that he'd like to read his and get it off his mind, so he wouldn't be so nervous and could enjoy listening to the others. He wasn't used to such things, he

said, and couldn't be original like Mr. Rabbit, but he knew a story that was told among the fowls in Mr. Man's barn-yard, and that he had tried to write it in a simple way that even Mr. 'Possum would understand. His story was about a duck—a young and foolish duck—who got into trouble, and Mr. Dog said he had made a few sketches to go with it, and that they could be handed around while he was reading. Now he would begin, he said, and the name of his story was

ERASTUS, THE ROBBER DUCK

By Mr. Dog, with Sketches

Once upon a time there was a foolish young duck named Erastus (called 'Rastus, for short). He was an only child, and lived with his mother in a small house on the bank of a pond at the foot of the farm-yard.

Erastus thought himself a brave duck; he would chase his shadow, and was not afraid of quite a large worm.

As he grew older he did not tell his mother everything. Once he slipped away, and went swimming alone. Then a worm larger than any he had ever seen came up out of the water, and would have swallowed Erastus if he had not reached the shore just in time, and gone screaming to his mother.

His mother said the great worm was a water-snake, and she told Erastus snake-stories which gave him bad dreams.

MR. DOG SAID HE HAD MADE A FEW SKETCHES

Erastus grew quite fast, and soon thought he was nearly grown up. Once he tried to smoke with some other young ducks behind the barn. It made Erastus sick, and his mother found it out. She gave Erastus some unpleasant medicine, and made him stay in bed a week.

Erastus decided that he would run away. While his mother was taking her morning bath he packed his things in a little valise she had given him for Christmas. Then he slipped out the back door and made for the woods as fast as he could go. He had made up his mind to be a robber, and make a great deal of money by taking it away from other people.

He had begun by taking a small toy pistol which belonged to Mr. Man's little boy. He wore it at his side. His mother had read to him about robbers. Erastus also had on his nice new coat and pretty vest.

He did not rob anybody that day. There was nothing in the woods but trees and vines. Erastus tripped over the vines and hurt himself, and lost the toy pistol.

Then it came night, and he was very lonesome. For the first time in his life Erastus missed his mother. There was a nice full moon, but Erastus did not care for it. Some of the black shadows about him looked as if they might be live things. By-and-by he heard a noise near him.

Erastus the Robber Duck started to run; but he was lost,

and did not know which way to go. All at once he was face to face with some large animal. It wore a long cape and a mask. It also carried a real pistol which it pointed at Erastus and told him to hold up his wings. Erastus the Robber Duck held up his wings as high as possible, and tried to get them higher. It did not seem to Erastus that he could hold them up high enough. His mother had read to him about robbers.

Then the robber took all the things that Erastus had in his pockets. He took his new knife and his little watch; also the nice bag which his mother had given him for Christmas.

Erastus kept his wings up a good while after the robber had gone. He was afraid the robber had not gone far enough. When he put them down they were cramped and sore. Then he heard something again, and thought it was the robber coming back after his clothes.

Erastus fled with great speed, taking off his garments as he ran. At last he reached the edge of the wood, not far from were he lived. It was just morning, and his mother saw him coming. She looked sad, and embraced him.

It was the first time Erastus had been out all night.

Erastus was not allowed to go swimming or even to leave the yard for a long time. Whenever he remembered that night in the woods he shivered, and his mother thought he

had a chill. Then she would put him to bed and give him some of the unpleasant medicine.

Erastus did not tell his mother *all* that had happened that night for a good while. He was ashamed to do so. But one day when he seemed quite sick and his mother was frightened, he broke down and told her all about it. Then his mother forgave him, and he got well right away.

After that Erastus behaved, and grew to be the best and largest duck in Mr. Man's farm-yard.

While Mr. Dog had been reading his story the Hollow Tree People—the 'Coon and the 'Possum and the Old Black Crow—had been leaning forward and almost holding their breath, and Mr. Dog felt a good deal flattered when he noticed how interested they were. When he sat down he saw that Mr. 'Possum's mouth was open and his tongue fairly hanging out with being so excited.

Then before any of the others could say a word, Mr. 'Possum said that it might be a good enough story, but that it couldn't be true. He said that he wasn't a judge of stories, but that he was a judge of ducks—young ducks, or old either—and that no young duck could pass the night in the Big Deep Woods and get home at sunrise or any other time, unless all the other animals were snowed in or locked up in a menagerie, and that the animal that had met

MR. 'POSSUM SAID IT MIGHT BE A GOOD ENOUGH STORY, BUT IT COULDN'T BE TRUE

Erastus might have robbed him, of course, but he would have eaten him first, and then carried off what was left, unless, of course, that robber was a rabbit, and he said that he didn't believe any rabbit would have spunk enough to be in that business.

Mr. Rabbit was about to say something just then, but Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon both interrupted and said they thought Mr. 'Possum was right for once, except about Mr. Rabbit, who was plenty brave enough, but too much of a gentleman to be out robbing people at night when he could be at home in bed asleep. Then Mr. Dog said:

"I don't know whether the story is true or not. I wrote it down as I heard it among Mr. Man's fowls, and I know the duck that they still call Erastus, and he's the finest, fattest—"

But Mr. Dog didn't get any further. For the Hollow Tree People broke in and said, all together:

"Oh, take us to see him, Mr. Dog! Or perhaps you could bring him to see us. Invite him to spend an evening with us in the Hollow Tree. Tell him we will have him for dinner and invite our friends. Oh, do, Mr. Dog!"

But Mr. Dog knew what they meant by having him for dinner, and he said he guessed Mr. Man would not be willing to have Erastus go out on an invitation like that, and that if Erastus came, Mr. Man might take a notion to visit the

Hollow Tree himself. Then the Hollow Tree People all said, "Oh, never mind about Erastus! He's probably old and disagreeable anyway. We don't think we would care for him. But it was a nice story—very nice, indeed."

And pretty soon Mr. Dog said he'd been thinking about the robber animal, too, and had made up his mind that it might have been one of Mr. Cat's family—for Mr. Man's little boy and girl had a book with a nice poem in it about a robber cat, and a robber dog, too, though he didn't think that the dog could have been any of *his* family. Mr. Cat, he said, would not be likely to care for Erastus, feathers and all, that way, and no doubt it really was Mr. Cat who robbed him. Mr. Dog said that he had once heard of a Mr. Cat who wanted to be king—perhaps after Mr. Lion had gone out of the king business, and that there was an old poem about it that Mr. Dog's mother used to sing to him, but he didn't think it had ever been put into a book. He said there were a good many things in it he didn't suppose the Hollow Tree People would understand because it was about a different kind of a country—where his mother had been born—but that if they really would like to hear it he would try to remember it for them, as it would be something different from anything they had been used to. Then the Hollow Tree People and their friends all said how glad they would be to hear it, for they always liked to hear about

new things and new parts of the country; so Mr. Dog said that if some of the others would read or sing or dance their jigs first, perhaps it would come to him and he would sing it for them by and by.

Then Mr. Robin spoke up and said that he thought Mr. Dog's story had a good moral in it, and he said that *his* story (Mr. Robin's, of course) was that kind of a story, too. Perhaps he'd better tell it now, he said, while their minds were running that way, though as for Mr. 'Possum's mind it seemed to be more on how good Erastus might be cooked than how good he had become in his behavior. He was sorry, he said, that his story didn't have any ducks in it, young or old, but that perhaps Mr. 'Possum and the others would be willing to wait for the nice pair of cooked ones now hanging in Mr. Crow's pantry, to be served at the end of the literary exercises.

But Mr. 'Possum said "No," he wasn't willing to wait any longer—that Mr. Dog's story and the mention of those nice cooked fowls was more than he could bear, and that if it was all the same to Mr. Robin and the others he voted to have supper first, and then he'd be better able to stand a strictly moral story on a full stomach.

Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon said that was a good idea, and Mr. Rabbit said he thought they'd better postpone Mr. Robin's story until the next evening, as Mr. 'Possum had

taken up so much time with his arguments that he must be hungrier than usual, and if he put in as much more time eating, it would be morning before they were ready to go on with the literary programme.

Then they all looked at the clock and saw that it really was getting late, though that was the only way they could tell, for the snow covered all the windows and made no difference between day and night in the Hollow Tree.

THE "SNOWED-IN" LITERARY CLUB—Part II

THE "SNOWED-IN" LITERARY CLUB

PART II

MR. RABBIT STARTS SOME NEW AMUSEMENTS

IT was still dark in the Hollow Tree when the Deep Woods People woke up next morning, but they knew what was the matter now, and could tell by the clock and the fire that it was day outside, even before Mr. 'Possum ran up to his room and looked out the window and came back shivering, because he said the snow was blowing and drifting and some had drifted in around his windows and made his room as cold as all outdoors. He said he was willing to stay by the fire while this spell lasted, and take such exercise as he needed by moving his chair around to the table when he wanted to eat.

Mr. 'Coon said that Mr. 'Possum might exercise himself on a little wood for the cook-stove in Mr. Crow's kitchen if he

wanted any breakfast, and that if this spell kept up long enough, they wouldn't have anything left but exercise to keep them alive.

So Mr. 'Possum went down-stairs after an armful of stove-wood, and he stayed a good while, though they didn't notice it at the time. Then they all helped with the breakfast, and after breakfast they pushed back all the things and played "Blind Man's Buff," for Mr. Rabbit said that even if moving his chair from the fire to the table and back again was enough exercise for Mr. 'Possum, it wasn't enough for *him*, and the others said so, too.

So then Mr. Rabbit said they must choose who would be "It" first, and they all stood in a row and Mr. Rabbit said:

"Hi, ho, hickory dee—
One for you and one for me;
One for the ones you try to find,
And one for the one that wears the blind,"

which was a rigmarole Mr. Rabbit had made up himself to use in games where somebody had to be "It," and Mr. Rabbit said it around and around the circle on the different ones—one word for each one—until he came to the word "blind" and that was Mr. 'Possum, who had to put on the handkerchief and do more exercising than any of them, until he caught Mr. Turtle, who had to be "It" quite often,

SO THEN MR. RABBIT SAID THEY MUST CHOOSE WHO WOULD BE "IT"

because he couldn't get out of the way as well as the others.

And Mr. 'Possum was "It" a good deal, too, and Mr. 'Coon, and all the rest, though Mr. Robin was "It" less than anybody, because he was so little and spry that he could get out of the way.

Then when they were tired of "Blind Man's Buff" they played "Pussy Wants a Corner" and "Forfeits," and Mr. 'Possum had to make a speech to redeem his forfeit, and he began:

"Ladies and Gentlemen" (though there were no ladies present)—"I am pleased to see you all here this evening" (though it wasn't evening) "looking so well dressed and well fed. It is better to be well fed than well dressed. It is better to be well dressed than not dressed at all. It is better to be not dressed at all than not fed at all. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention and applause"—though they hadn't applauded yet, but they did, right away, and said it was a good speech, and Mr. Crow said it reminded him that it was about dinner-time, and that he would need some more wood.

So Mr. 'Possum got right up to get the stove-wood again, which everybody thought was very good of Mr. 'Possum, who wasn't usually so spry and willing.

Then in the afternoon they had games again, but nice

MR. 'POSSUM HAD TO PUT ON THE HANDKERCHIEF AND DO MORE EXERCISING THAN ANY OF THEM

quiet games, for they were all glad to sit down, and they played "Button! Button! Who's Got the Button?" and nobody could tell when Mr. 'Possum had the button, for his face didn't show it, because he was nearly always looking straight into the fire, and seemed to be thinking about something away off. And when the fire got low, he always jumped up and offered to go down into the store-room after the wood, and they all said how willing and spry Mr. 'Possum was getting all at once, and when he stayed a good while down-stairs they didn't think anything about it—not at the time—or if they did they only thought he was picking out the best pieces to burn. They played "Drop the Handkerchief," too, and when they got through Mr. Rabbit performed some tricks with the handkerchief and the button that made even Mr. 'Possum pay attention because they were so wonderful.

There was one trick especially that Mr. Rabbit did a great many times because they liked it so much, and were so anxious to guess how it was done. Mr. Rabbit told them it was a trick that had come down to him from his thirty-second great-grandfather, and must never be told to any one.

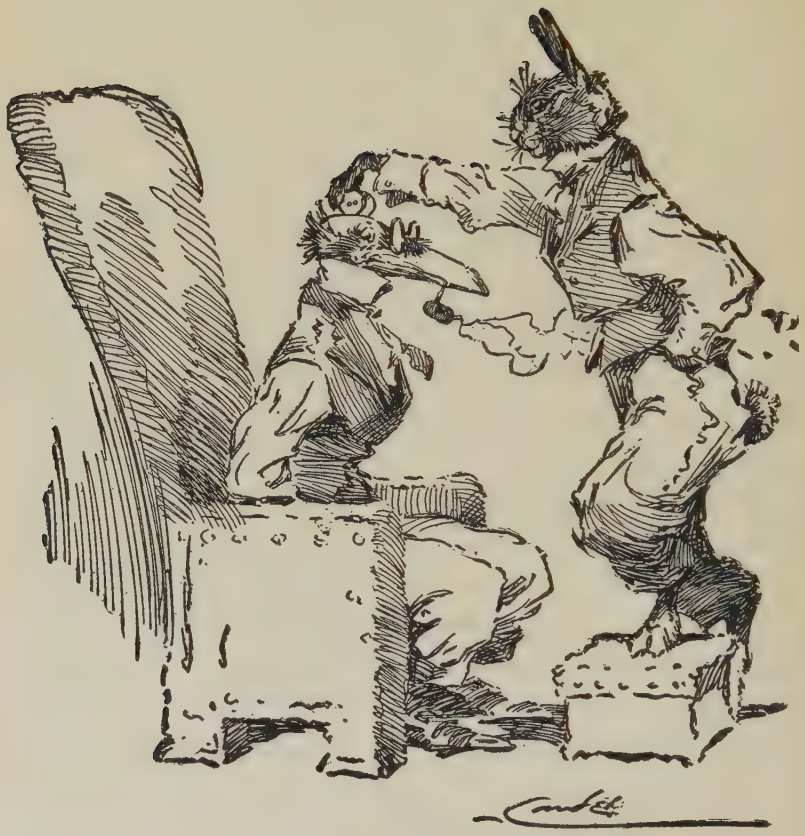
It was a trick where he laid the button in the centre of the handkerchief and then folded the corners down on it, and pressed them down each time so that they could see that the button was still there, and he would let them press

on it, too, to prove it, and then when he would lift up the handkerchief by the two corners nearest him there would be no button at all, and he would find it on the mantel-shelf or perhaps on Mr. Crow's bald head, or in Mr. 'Possum's pocket, or some place like that. But one time, when Mr. Rabbit had done it over and over, and maybe had grown a little careless, he lifted the handkerchief by the corners nearest him, and there was the button sticking fast, right in the centre of the handkerchief, for it had a little beeswax on it, to make it stick to one of the corners next to Mr. Rabbit, and by some mistake Mr. Rabbit had turned the button upside down!

Then they all laughed, and all began to try it for themselves, and Mr. Rabbit laughed too, though perhaps he didn't feel much like it, and told them that they had learned one of the greatest secrets in his family, and that he would now tell them the adage that went with it if they would promise never to tell either the secret or the adage, and they all promised, and Mr. Rabbit told them the adage, which was:

"When beeswax grows on the button-tree,
No one knows what the weather 'll be."

"That," said Mr. Rabbit, "is a very old adage. I don't know what it means exactly, but I'm sure it means something, because old adages always do mean something,



WOULD FIND IT ON THE MANTEL-SHELF OR PERHAPS ON MR. CROW'S BALD HEAD

though often nobody can find out just what it is, and the less they seem to mean the better they are, as adages. There are a great many old adages in our family, and they have often got my ancestors out of trouble. When we didn't have an old one to fit the trouble we made a new one, and by-and-by it got old too, and useful in different ways, because by that time it didn't seem to mean anything special, and could be used almost anywhere."

Then the Deep Woods People all said there was never anybody who knew so much and could do so many things as Mr. Jack Rabbit, and how proud they all were to have him in their midst, and Mr. Rabbit showed them how to do all the tricks he knew, and they all practised them and tried them on each other until Mr. Crow said he must look after the supper, and Mr. 'Possum ran right off after an armful of stove-wood, and everybody helped with everything there was to do, for they were having such a good time and were so hungry.

And after supper they all sat around the fire again and smoked a little before anybody said anything, until by-and-by Mr. Rabbit said that they would go on now with the literary club, and that Mr. Robin might read the story he had mentioned the night before.

So Mr. Robin got up, and stood on a chair, and made a nice bow. He said it was not really his own story he had

written, but one that his grandmother used to tell him sometimes, though he didn't think it had ever been put into a book.

Then Mr. Rabbit spoke up and said that that didn't matter, that of course everybody couldn't be original, and that the story itself was the main thing and the way you told it. He said if Mr. Robin would go right on with the story now it would save time. So then they all knocked the ashes out of their pipes—all except Mr. Robin, who began right off to read his story:

THE DISCONTENTED FOX

THE DISCONTENTED FOX

MR. ROBIN TELLS HOW A FOX LEARNED A GOOD LESSON BY TAKING A LONG JOURNEY

ONCE upon a time there was a Fox who lived at the foot of a hill and had a *nice garden.* One morning when he began to hoe in it he got tired, and the sun was *very hot.* Then the Fox didn't like to hoe any more, and made up his mind that it wasn't very pleasant to have a garden, anyway.

So then he started out to travel and find *pleasant things.* He put on his best clothes, and the first house he came to belonged to a Rabbit who kept bees. And the Rabbit showed the Fox his bees and how to take out the honey. And the Fox said, "What *pleasan work!*" and wanted to take out honey too. But when he did there was a bee on the honey, and it stung the Fox on the nose. And that hurt the Fox, and his nose began to swell up, and he said: "This is not pleasant work *at all!*" and of course it wasn't

—not for *him*—though the Rabbit seemed to enjoy it *more than ever.*

So the Fox travelled on, and the next house he came to belonged to a Crow who made pies. And the Fox looked at him awhile and said, "What *pleasant work!*" And the Crow let the Fox help him, and when the Fox went to take a pie out of the oven he burnt his fingers *quite badly.* Then he said, "No, it is *not* pleasant work—not for *me!*" and that was true, though the Crow seemed to enjoy it *more than ever.*

So the Fox went on again, and the next house he came to belonged to a 'Coon who milked cows. And the Fox watched him milk, and pretty soon he said: "What pleasant work that *is!* Let *me* milk." So the Coon let the Fox milk, and the Cow put her foot in the milk-pail and upset it *all over* the Fox's nice *new clothes.* And the Fox was mad, and said: "This work is not in the *least* pleasant!" and he *hurried away,* though the 'Coon seemed to enjoy it *more than ever.*

And the next house the Fox came to belonged to a Cat who played the fiddle. And the Fox listened awhile and said: "What pleasant work that *must be!*" and he borrowed the Cat's fiddle. But when he started down the road playing, a Man ran around the corner and shot a loud gun at him, and that was not pleasant, *either,* though the Cat seemed to enjoy it *more than ever.*

So the Fox kept on travelling and *doing* things that he thought would be *pleasant*, but that did not turn out to *be* pleasant—not for *him*—until by-and-by he had travelled *clear around the world* and had come up on the other side, *back* to his *own garden* again. And his garden was just the same as he had left it, only the things had grown bigger, and there were *some weeds*.

And the Fox jumped over the fence and commenced to *hoe* the *weeds*, and pretty soon he said, "Why, this is *pleasant!*" Then he hoed some more, and said, "Why, what pleasant work *this is!*"

So he kept on hoeing and finding it pleasant until by-and-by the weeds were *all gone*, and the *Rabbit* and the *Crow* and the *Cat* and the *'Coon* came and traded him honey and pies and milk and music for vegetables, because he had the best garden in the world. And he *has yet!*

When Mr. Robin got through and sat down, Mr. Squirrel spoke up and said it was a good story because it had a moral lesson in it and taught folks to like the things they knew best how to do, and Mr. 'Possum said yes, that might be so, but that the story couldn't be true, because none of those animals would have enjoyed seeing that Fox leave them, but would have persuaded him to stay and help them, and would have taught him to do most of the work.

Then Mr. Robin spoke up and said that Mr. 'Possum thought everybody was like himself, and that anyway Mr. 'Possum didn't need the lesson in that story, for he already liked to do the things he could do best, which were to eat and sleep and let other people do the work, though of course he had been very good about getting the wood, lately, which certainly was unusual.

Then Mr. 'Possum said he didn't see why Mr. Robin should speak in that cross way when he had only meant to be kind and show him the mistake in his story, so he could fix it right. And Mr. Rabbit said that as Mr. 'Possum seemed to know so much how stories and poems ought to be written, perhaps he'd show now what he could do in that line himself.

Mr. 'Possum said he hadn't written anything because it was too much trouble, but that he would tell them a story if they would like to hear it—something that had really happened, because he had been there, and was old enough to remember.

But before he began Mr. Robin said that as they had not cared much about his story he would like to recite a few lines he had thought of, which would perhaps explain how he felt, and all the animals said, "Of course, go right on," and Mr. Robin bowed and recited a little poem he had made, called

ONLY ME

By C. Robin

How came a little bird like me
  A place in this fine group to win?
My mind is small—it has to be—
  The little place I keep it in.
How came a little bird like me
To be here in the Hollow Tree?

When all the others know so much,
  And are so strong and gifted too,
How can I dare to speak of such
  As I can know, and think, and do?
How can a little bird like me
Belong here in the Hollow Tree?

Well, when Mr. Robin finished that, all the others spoke right up and said that Mr. Robin must never write anything so sad as that again. They said his story was just as good as it could be, and that Mr. Robin was one of the smartest ones there; and Mr. 'Possum burst into tears, and said that he hadn't meant anything at all by what he had said about the story, and that some time, when they were all alone, Mr.

MR. 'POSSUM SAID HE HADN'T MEANT ANYTHING AT ALL BY WHAT HE HAD SAID ABOUT THE STORY

Robin must tell it to him again, and he would try to have sense enough to understand it.

Then he ran over to Mr. Robin, and was going to embrace him and weep on his shoulder, and would very likely have mashed him if Mr. Turtle hadn't dragged him back to his seat and told him that he had done damage enough to people's feelings without killing anybody, and the best thing he could do now would be to go on with a story of his own if he had any.

But Mr. 'Possum said he was too sleepy now, so Mr. Dog sang the poem which he had promised the evening before because, he said, singing would be a nice thing to go to sleep on. Mr. Dog's song was called

THE CAT WHO WOULD BE KING

There was cat who kept a store,
With other cats for customers.
His milk and mice
All packed in ice—
His catnip all in canisters.

Fresh milk he furnished every day—
Two times a day and sometimes three—

AND SO THIS CAT GREW RICH AND FAT

And so this cat
Grew rich and fat
And proud as any cat could be.

But though so fat and rich he grew
He was not satisfied at all—
At last quoth he,
"A king I'll be
Of other cats both great and small."

Then hied he to the tinner cat,
Who made for him a tinsel crown,
And on the street,
A king complete,
He soon went marching up and down.

Now, many cats came out to see,
And some were filled with awe at him;
While some, alack,
Behind his back
Did laugh and point a paw at him.

HIS CLERKS

Mice, milk, and catnip did he scorn;
He went to business less and less—
And everywhere
He wore an air
Of arrogance and haughtiness.

His clerks ate catnip all day long—
They spent much time in idle play;
They left the mice
From off the ice—
They trusted cats who could not pay.

A SOLEMN LOOK WAS IN HIS FACE

While happy in his tin-shop crown
Each day the king went marching out,
Elate because
He thought he was
The kind of king you read about.

But lo, one day, he strolled too far,
And in a dim and dismal place
A cat he met,
Quite small, and yet
A solemn look was in his face.

One fiery eye this feline wore—
A waif he was of low degree—
No gaudy dress
Did he possess,
Nor yet a handsome cat was he.

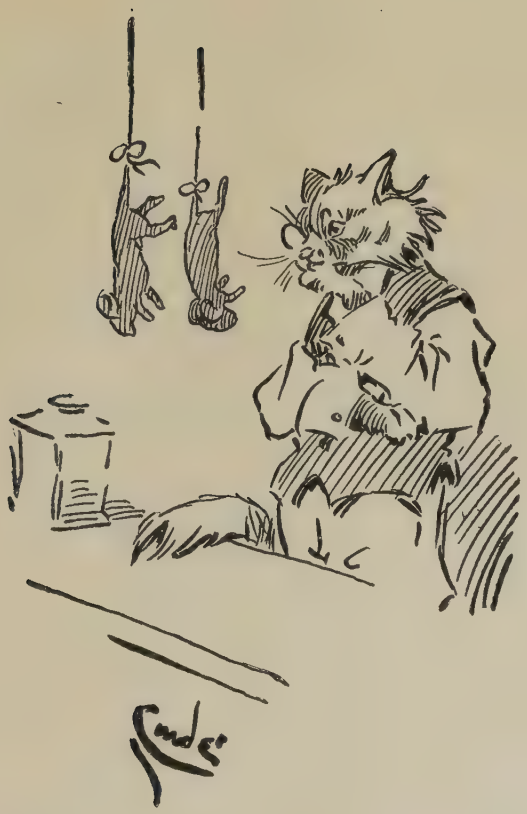
But lo, he smote that spurious king
And stripped him of his tinsel crown,
Then like the wind
Full close behind
He chased His Highness into town.

With cheers his subjects saw him come.
He did not pause—he did not stop,
But straight ahead
He wildly fled
Till he was safe within his shop.

He caught his breath and gazed about—
A sorry sight did he behold:
No catnip there
Or watchful care—
No mice and milk and joy of old.

He heaved a sigh and dropped a tear—
He sent those idle clerks away—
Quoth he, "My pride
Is satisfied;
This kingdom business does not pay."

With care once more he runs his store,
His catnip all in canisters—
His milk and mice
All packed in ice,
And humbly serves his customers.



QUOTH HE, "MY PRIDE IS SATISFIED;
THIS KINGDOM BUSINESS DOES NOT PAY"

MR. 'POSSUM'S GREAT STORY

MR. 'POSSUM'S GREAT STORY

MR. 'POSSUM TELLS THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF THE 'POSSUM FAMILY, TO THE SURPRISE OF HIS FRIENDS

"NOW this," said the Story Teller, "is the story that Mr. 'Possum told the 'Snowed-In' Literary Club in the Hollow Tree. It must be a true story, because Mr. 'Possum said so, and, besides, anybody that knows Mr. 'Possum would know that he could never in the world have made it up out of his head."

The Little Lady doesn't quite like that.

"But Mr. 'Possum is smart," she says. "He knows ever so much."

"Oh yes, of course, and that's why he never *has* to make up things. He just tells what he knows, and this time he told

HOW UNCLE SILAS AND AUNT MELISSY MOVED

"You may remember," he said, "my telling you once about Uncle Silas and Aunt Melissy Lovejoy, who lived in

a nice place just beyond the Wide Paw-paw Hollows, and how Uncle Silas once visited Cousin Glenwood in town and came home all dressed up, leading a game chicken, and with a bag of shinny-sticks, and a young man to wait on him; and how Aunt Melissy—instead of being pleased, as Uncle Silas thought she would be—got mad when she saw him, and made him and the young man take off all their nice clothes and go to work in the garden, and kept them at it with that bag of shinny-sticks until fall.*

"Well, this story is about them, too. I went to live with them soon after that, because I lost both of my parents one night when Mr. Man was hunting in the Black Bottoms for something to put in a pan with some sweet potatoes he had raised that year, and I suppose I would have been used with sweet potatoes too if I hadn't come away from there pretty lively instead of trying our old playing-dead trick on Mr. Man and his friends.

"I thought right away that Mr. Man might know the trick, so I didn't wait to try it myself, but took out for the Wide Paw-paw Hollows, to visit Uncle Silas Lovejoy, who was an uncle on my mother's side, and Aunt Melissy and my little cousins; and they all seemed glad to see me, especially my little cousins, until they found they had to give me some of their things and most of their food, because I was young

* *Hollow Tree and Deep Woods Book.*

and growing, besides being quite sad about my folks, and so, of course, had to eat a good deal to keep well and from taking my loss too hard.

"But by-and-by Uncle Lovejoy said that he didn't believe that he and the hired man—who was the same one he had brought home to wait on him when he came from town—to be his valet, he said—though he got to be a hired man right after Aunt Melissy met him and got hold of the shinny-sticks—Aunt Melissy being a spry, stirring person who liked to see people busy. I remember how she used to keep me and my little cousins busy until sometimes I wished I had stayed with my folks and put up with the sweet potatoes and let Uncle Silas and his family alone."

Mr. 'Possum stopped to light his pipe, and Mr. Rabbit said that he supposed, of course, Mr. 'Possum knew his story and how to tell it, but that if he ever intended to finish what Uncle Lovejoy had said about himself and the hired man he wished he'd get at it pretty soon.

Mr. 'Possum said of course he meant to, as soon as he could get his breath, and think a minute. "Well, then," he said, "Uncle Silas told Aunt Melissy that he didn't believe he and the hired man could raise and catch enough for the family since I had come to stay with them, and he thought they had better move farther west to a place where the land was better and where Mr. Man's chickens were not kept

up in such close, unhealthy places, but were allowed to roost out in the open air, on the fences and in the trees. He said he didn't think their house was quite stylish enough either, which he knew would strike Aunt Melissy, who was a Glenwood, and primpy, and fond of the best things.

"So then we began to pack up right away, and Uncle Silas and Aunt Melissy quarrelled a good deal about what was worth taking and what wasn't, and they took turns scolding the hired man about a good many things he didn't do and almost all of the things he did do, and my little cousins and I had a fine time running through the empty rooms and playing with things we had never seen before, but we had to keep out of Aunt Melissy's reach if we wanted to enjoy it much.

"Well, by-and-by we were all packed up and ready to start. We had everything in bundles or tied together, and Aunt Melissy had arranged a big bundle for Uncle Silas to carry, and several things to tie and hang about on his person in different places, and she had fixed up the hired man too, besides some bundles for me and my little cousins.

"Aunt Melissy said she would take charge of the lunch-basket and lead the way, and she was all dressed up and carried an umbrella, and didn't look much as if she belonged to the rest of our crowd.

It was pretty early when we started, for it was getting

AUNT MELISSY HAD ARRANGED A BUNDLE FOR UNCLE SILAS,
AND SHE HAD FIXED UP THE HIRED MAN TOO

dangerous to camp out in that section, and we wanted to get as far as we could the first day, though we didn't any of us have any idea then how long a trip we *would* make that day, nor of the way we were going to make it. Nobody could guess a guess like that, even if he was the best guesser in the world and made his living that way."

Mr. 'Possum stopped to light his pipe again, and said that if anybody wanted a chance to guess how far they went that first day and how they travelled, they could guess now. But the Hollow Tree People said they didn't want to guess, and they did want Mr. 'Possum to go ahead and tell them about it.

"Well," said Mr. 'Possum, "we travelled fifty miles that first day, and we travelled it in less than two hours."

"Fifty miles in two hours!" said all the Hollow Tree People. And Jack Rabbit said:

"Why, a menagerie like that couldn't travel fifty miles in two years!"

"But we did, though," said Mr. 'Possum; "we travelled it in a balloon."

"In a balloon!"

"Well, not exactly in a balloon, but *with* a balloon. It happened just as I'm going to tell you.

"We went along pretty well until we got to the Wide Grass Lands, though Aunt Melissy scolded Uncle Silas a

DIDN'T LOOK AS IF SHE BELONGED TO THE REST OF OUR CROWD

good deal because he got behind and didn't stand up in a nice stylish way with all the things he had to carry, and she used her umbrella once on the hired man because he dropped the clock.

"When we got out to the Wide Grass Lands there was a high east wind blowing, getting ready for a storm, and when we got on top of a little grassy hill close to the Wide Blue Water it blew Uncle Silas and the hired man so they could hardly stand up, and it turned Aunt Melissy's umbrella wrong side out, which made her mad, and she said that it was Uncle Silas's fault and mine, and that she had never wanted to move anyway.

"But just then one of my little cousins looked up in the sky and said, 'Oh, look at that funny bird!' and we all looked up, and there was a great big long bag of a thing coming right toward us, not very high up, and Uncle Silas spoke up and said 'That's a balloon,' for Uncle Silas had seen one in town when he was there visiting Cousin Glenwood, and the hired man, too. Then while we were all standing there watching it, we saw that there was a long rope that hung from the balloon most to the ground, and that it had something tied to the end of it (a big iron thing with a lot of hooks on it), and that it was swooping down straight toward us.

"Uncle Silas called out as loud as he could, 'That's the anchor! Look out!' but it was too late to look out, for it

was coming as fast as the wind blew the balloon, and Uncle Silas and the hired man being loaded with the things couldn't move very quick, and the rest of us were too scared to know which way to jump, and down came that thing right among us, and I saw it catch among Uncle Silas's furniture and the hired man's, and I heard Uncle Silas say, 'Grab hold, all of you!' and we all did, some one way and some another, and away we went.

"Well, it was certainly very curious how we all were lucky enough to get hold of that anchor, with all our bundles and things; but of course we could do it better than if we had not been given those nice useful tails which belong to our family. I had hold that way, and some of the others did, too. Uncle Silas didn't need to hold on at all, for some of the furniture was tied to him, and he just sat back in a chair that was hung on behind and took it easy, though he did drop some of his things when he first got aboard, and Aunt Melissy scolded him for that as soon as she caught her breath and got over being frightened and was sitting up on her part of the anchor enjoying the scenery.

"I never had such a trip as that before, and never expect to have one again. The balloon went over the Wide Blue Water just after it got our family, and we were all afraid we would be let down in it and drowned; but the people who were in the balloon threw out something heavy which we

THE BALLOON WENT OVER THE WIDE BLUE WATER JUST AFTER IT GOT OUR FAMILY

thought at first they were throwing at us, but it must have been something to make the balloon go up; for we did go up until Aunt Melissy said if we'd just get a little nearer one of those clouds she'd step out on it and live there, as she'd always wanted to do since she was a child.

"Then we all sat up and held on tight, above and below, and said what a nice day it was to travel, and that we'd always travel that way hereafter; and Uncle Silas and the hired man unhooked their furniture, so they could land easier when the time came, and Aunt Melissy passed around the lunch, and we looked down and saw the water and the land again and a lot of houses and trees, and Aunt Melissy said that nobody could ever made her believe the world was that big if she hadn't seen it with her own eyes.

"And Uncle Silas and the hired man said that of course this was going pretty fast, but that they had travelled a good deal faster sometimes when they were in town with Cousin Glenwood, and pretty soon he showed us the town where Cousin Glenwood lived, and he and the hired man tried to point out the house to us, but they couldn't agree about which it was because the houses didn't look the same from up there in the air as they did from down on the ground.

"I know I shall never forget that trip. We saw ever so many different Mr. Men and Mr. Dogs, and animals of

every kind, and houses that had chimneys taller than any tree, and a good many things that even Uncle Silas did not know about. Then by-and-by we came to some woods again—the biggest kind of Big Deep Woods—and we saw that we were getting close to the tree-tops, and we were all afraid we would get hit by the branches and maybe knocked off with our things.

"And pretty soon, sure enough, that anchor did drop right down among the trees, and such a clapping and scratching as we did get!

"We shut our eyes and held on, and some of our furniture was brushed off of Uncle Silas and the hired man, and Aunt Melissy lost her umbrella, and I lost a toy chicken, which I could never find again. Then all at once there was a big sudden jerk that jarred Uncle Silas loose, and made Aunt Melissy holler that she was killed, and knocked the breath out of the rest of us for a few minutes.

"But we were all there, and the anchor was fast on the limb of a big tree—a tree almost as big as the Hollow Tree, and hollow, just like it, with a nice handy place to go in.

"So when we got our senses back we picked up all our things that we could find, and moved into the new place, and Aunt Melissy looked at the clock, which was still running, and it was just a little over two hours since we started.

"Then pretty soon we heard Mr. Man and his friends

who had been up in the balloon coming, and we stayed close inside till they had taken the anchor and everything away, and after that, when it was getting dark, Uncle Silas and the hired man went out and found, not very far off, where there were some nice chickens that roosted in handy places, and brought home two or three, and Aunt Melissy set up the stove and cooked up a good supper, and we all sat around the kitchen fire, and the storm that the east wind had been blowing up came along sure enough and it rained all night, but we were snug and dry, and went to sleep mostly in beds made down on the floor, and lay there listening to the rain and thinking what a nice journey we'd had and what a good new home we'd found.

"And it *was* a good place, for I lived there till I grew up, and if I'm not mistaken some of Uncle Silas's and Aunt Melissy's children live there still. I haven't heard from any of them for a long time, but I am thinking of going on a visit over that way in the spring, and if that balloon is still running I'm going to travel with it.

"And that," said Mr. 'Possum, "is a true story—all true, every word, for I was there."

Nobody said anything for a minute or two after Mr. 'Possum had finished his story—nobody *could* say anything.

Then Mr. Rabbit coughed a little and remarked that he was glad that Mr. 'Possum said that the story was true,

for no one would ever have suspected it. He said if Mr. 'Possum hadn't said it was true he would have thought it was one of those pleasant dreams that Mr. 'Possum had when he slept hanging to a peg head down.

But Mr. Turtle, who had been sitting with his eyes shut and looking as if he were asleep, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and said that what Mr. 'Possum had told them was true—at least, *some* of it was true; for he himself had been sitting in the door of his house on the shore of the Wide Blue Water when the balloon passed over, and he had seen Uncle Silas Lovejoy's family sitting up there anchored and comfortable; and he had picked up a chair that Uncle Silas had dropped, and he had it in his house to this day, it being a good strong chair and better than any that was made nowadays.

Well, of course after that nobody said anything about Mr. 'Possum's story not being true, for they remembered how old and wise Mr. Turtle was and could always prove things, and they all talked about it a great deal, and asked Mr. 'Possum a good many questions.

They said how nice it was to know somebody who had had an adventure like that, and Mr. Rabbit changed his seat so he could be next to Mr. 'Possum, because he said he wanted to write it all down to keep.

And Mr. 'Possum said he never would forget how good

MR. TURTLE SAID THAT WHAT MR. 'POSSUM HAD TOLD THEM WAS TRUE

those chickens tasted that first night in the new home, and that Mr. Rabbit mustn't forget to put them in.

Then they all remembered that they were hungry now, and Mr. Crow and Mr. Squirrel and Mr. Robin hustled around to get a bite to eat before bedtime, and Mr. 'Possum hurried down to bring up the stove-wood, and was gone quite awhile, though nobody spoke of it—not then—even if they did wonder about it a little—and after supper they all sat around the fire again and smoked and dropped off to sleep while the clock ticked and the blaze flickered about and made queer shadows on the wall of the Hollow Tree.

THE BARK OF OLD HUNGRY-WOLF

THE BARK OF OLD HUNGRY-WOLF

HOW THE HOLLOW TREE PEOPLE HAVE A MOST UNWELCOME VISITOR, AND WHAT BECOMES OF HIM

"WHAT made Mr. 'Possum so anxious to get the wood, and what made him stay down-stairs so long when he went after it?" asks the Little Lady next evening, when the Story Teller is lighting his pipe and getting ready to remember the history of the Hollow Tree.

"We're coming to that. You may be sure there was some reason for it, for Mr. 'Possum doesn't hurry after wood or stay long in a cold place if he can help it, unless he has something on his mind. Perhaps some of the Deep Woods People thought of that too, but if they did they didn't say anything—not at the time. I suppose they thought it didn't matter much, anyhow, if they got the wood."

So they went right on having a good time, keeping up a

nice fire, and eating up whatever they had; for they thought the big snow couldn't last as long as their wood and their things to eat, and every day they went up to look out of the up-stairs windows to see how much had melted, and every day they found it just about the same, only maybe a little crustier on top, and the weather stayed *very cold*.

But they didn't mind it so long as they were warm and not hungry, and they played games, and recited their pieces, and sang, and danced, and said they had never had such a good time in all their lives.

But one day when Mr. Crow went down into the store-room for supplies he found that he was at the bottom of the barrel of everything they had, and he came up looking pretty sober, though he didn't say anything about it—not then, for he knew there were plenty of bones and odds and ends he could scrape up, and he had a little flour and some meal in his pantry; so he could make soup and gravy and johnny-cake and hash, which he did right away, and they all said how fine such things were for a change, and told Mr. Crow to go right on making them as long as he wanted to, even if the snow stayed on till spring. And Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon said it was like old times, and that Mr. Crow was probably the very best provider in the Big Deep Woods.

Mr. Crow smiled, too, but he didn't feel like it much, for he knew that even johnny-cake and gravy wouldn't last

ONE DAY MR. CROW FOUND HE WAS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL OF EVERYTHING

forever, and that unless the snow went away pretty soon they would all be hungry and cold, for the wood was getting low, too.

And one morning, when Mr. Crow went to his meal-sack and his flour-bag and his pile of odds and ends there was just barely enough for breakfast, and hardly that. And Mr. Crow didn't like to tell them about it, for he knew they all thought he could keep right on making johnny-cake and gravy forever, because they didn't have to stop to think where things came from, as he did, and he was afraid they would blame him when there was nothing more left.

So the Old Black Crow tried to step around lively and look pleasant, to keep anybody from noticing, because he thought it might turn warm that day and melt the snow; and when breakfast was ready he put on what there was and said he hadn't cooked very much because he had heard that light breakfasts were better for people who stayed in the house a good deal, and as for himself, he said he guessed he wouldn't eat any breakfast that morning at all.

Then while the others were eating he crept down-stairs and looked at the empty boxes and barrels and the few sticks of wood that were left, and he knew that if that snow didn't melt off right away they were going to have a *very hard time*. Then he came back up in the big living-room and went on up-stairs to his own room, to look out the

window to see if it wasn't going to be a warm, melting day. But Mr. Crow came back pretty soon. He came back in a hurry, too, and he slammed his door and locked it, and then let go of everything and just slid down-stairs. Then the Deep Woods People jumped up quick from the table and ran to him, for they thought he was having a fit of some kind, and they still thought so when they looked into his face: for Mr. Crow's eyes were rolled up and his bill was pale, and when he tried to speak he couldn't. And Mr. Rabbit said it was because Mr. Crow had done without his breakfast, and he ran to get something from the table; but Mr. Crow couldn't eat, and then they saw that some of the feathers on top of his head were turning gray, and they knew he had seen some awful thing just that little moment he was in his room.

So then they all looked at one another and wondered what it was, and they were glad Mr. Crow had locked the door. Then they carried him over to the fire, and pretty soon he got so he could whisper a little, and when they knew what he was saying they understood why he was so scared and why he had locked the door; for the words that Mr. Crow kept whispering over and over were: "Old Hungry-Wolf! Old Hungry-Wolf! Old Hungry-Wolf!"

All the Deep Woods People know what that means. They know that when Old Hungry-Wolf comes, or even

when you hear him bark, it means that there is no food left in the Big Deep Woods for anybody, and that nobody can tell how long it will be before there *will* be food again. And all the Deep Woods People stood still and held their breath and listened for the bark of Old Hungry-Wolf, because they knew Mr. Crow had seen his face looking in the window. And they all thought they heard it, except Mr. 'Possum, who said he didn't believe it was Old Hungry-Wolf at all that Mr. Crow had seen, but only Mr. Gray Wolf himself, who had perhaps slipped out and travelled over the snow to see if they were all at home and comfortable.

But Mr. Crow said:

"No, no; it was Old Hungry-Wolf! He was big and black, and I saw his great fiery eyes!"

Then Mr. 'Possum looked very brave, and said he would see if Old Hungry-Wolf was looking into his window too, and he went right up, and soon came back and said there wasn't any big black face at his window, and he thought that Mr. Crow's empty stomach had made him imagine things.

So then Mr. 'Coon said that he would go up to *his* room if the others would like to come along, and they could see for themselves whether Old Hungry-Wolf was trying to get in or not.

Then they all went very quietly up Mr. 'Coon's stair (all except Mr. 'Possum, who stayed with Mr. Crow), and

THEN MR. 'COON SLAMMED HIS DOOR

they opened Mr. 'Coon's door and took one look inside, and then Mr. 'Coon he slammed *his* door shut, and locked it, and they all let go of everything and came sliding down in a heap, for they had seen the great fiery eyes and black face of Old Hungry-Wolf glaring in at Mr. Coon's window.

So they all huddled around the fire and lit their pipes—for they still had some tobacco—and smoked, but didn't say anything, until by-and-by Mr. Crow told them that there wasn't another bite to eat in the house and very little wood, and that that was the reason why Old Hungry-Wolf had come. And they talked about it in whispers—whether they ought to exercise any more, because though exercise would help them to keep warm and save wood, it would make them hungrier. And some of them said they thought they would try to go to sleep like Mr. Bear, who slept all winter and never knew that he was hungry until spring. So they kept talking, and now and then they would stop and listen, and they all said they could hear the bark of Old Hungry-Wolf—all except Mr. 'Possum, which was strange, because Mr. 'Possum is fond of good things and would be apt to be the very first to hear Old Hungry's bark.

And when the fire got very low and it was getting cold, Mr. 'Possum said for them not to move; that he would go down after a piece of wood, and he would attend to the fire

MR 'POSSUM SAID NOT TO MOVE, THAT HE WOULD GO AFTER A PIECE OF WOOD

as long as the wood lasted, and try to make it last as long as possible. And every time the fire got very low Mr. 'Possum would bring a piece of wood, and sometimes he stayed a good while (just for one piece of wood), but they still didn't think much about it—not then. What they did think about was how hungry they were, and Mr. 'Crow said he knew he could eat as much as the old ancestor of his that was told about in a book which he had once borrowed from Mr. Man's little boy who had left it out in the yard at dinner-time.

Then they all begged Mr. Crow to get the book and read it to them, and perhaps they could imagine they were not so hungry. So Mr. Crow brought the book and read them the poem about

THE RAVENOUS RAVEN

Oh, there was an old raven as black as could be,
And a wonderful sort of a raven was he;
For his house he kept tidy, his yard he kept neat,
And he cooked the most marvellous dainties to eat.
He could roast, he could toast, he could bake, he could fry,
He could stir up a cake in the wink of an eye,
He could boil, he could broil, he could grill, he could stew—
Oh, there wasn't a thing that this bird couldn't do.

He would smoke in the sun when the mornings were fair,
And his plans for new puddings and pies would prepare;
But, alas! like the famous Jim Crow with his shelf,
He was greedy, and ate all his dainties himself.

HE WOULD SMOKE IN THE SUN WHEN
THE MORNINGS WERE FAIR

It was true he was proud of the things he could cook,
And would call in his neighbors sometimes for a look,
Or a taste, it may be, when his pastry was fine;
But he'd never been known to invite them to dine.

With a look and a sigh they could stand and behold
All the puddings so brown and the sauces of gold;
With a taste and a growl they'd reluctantly go
Praying vengeance to fall on that greedy old crow.

WITH A LOOK AND A SIGH THEY WOULD STAND AND BEHOLD

Now, one morning near Christmas when holly grows green,
And the best of good things in the markets are seen,
He went out for a smoke in the crisp morning air,
And to think of some holiday dish to prepare.
Mr. Rabbit had spices to sell at his store,
Mr. Reynard had tender young chicks by the score,
And the old raven thought, as he stood there alone,
Of the tastiest pastry that ever was known.

Then away to the market he hurried full soon,
Dropping in for a chat with the 'possum and 'coon
Just to tell them his plans, which they heard with delight,
And to ask them to call for a moment that night

THE TASTIEST PASTRY THAT EVER WAS KNOWN

For a look and a taste of his pastry so fine,
And he hinted he might even ask them to dine.
Then he hurried away, and the rest of the day
Messrs. 'Possum and 'Coon were expectant and gay.

Oh, he hurried away and to market he went,
And his money for spices and poultry he spent,
While behind in the market were many, he knew,
Who would talk of the marvellous things he would do,

So with joy in his heart and with twinkling eye
He returned to his home his new project to try,
Then to stir and to bake he began right away,
And his dish was complete at the end of the day.

THEN TO STIR AND TO BAKE
HE BEGAN RIGHT AWAY

Aye, the marvel was done—'twas a rich golden hue,
And its smell was delicious—the old raven knew
That he never had made such a pastry before,
And a look of deep trouble his countenance wore;

"For," thought he, "I am certain the 'possum and 'coon
That I talked with to-day will be coming here soon,
And expect me to ask them to dine, when, you see,
There is just a good feast in this dainty for me."

Now, behold, he'd scarce uttered his thoughts when he heard
At the casement a tapping—this greedy old bird—
And the latch was uplifted, and gayly strode in
Both the 'coon and the 'possum with faces agrin.
They were barbered and brushed and arrayed in their best,
In the holiday fashion their figures were dressed,
While a look in each face, to the raven at least,
Said, "We've come here to-night, sir, prepared for a feast."

And the raven he smiled as he said, "Howdy-do?"
For he'd thought of a plan to get rid of the two;
And quoth he, "My dear friends, I am sorry to say
That the wonderful pastry I mentioned to-day
When it came to be baked was a failure complete,
Disappointing to taste and disturbing to eat.
I am sorry, dear friends, for I thought 'twould be fine;
I am sorry I cannot invite you to dine."

And the 'coon and the 'possum were both sorry, too,
And suspicious, somewhat, for the raven they knew.
They declared 'twas too bad all that pudding to waste,
And they begged him to give them at least just a taste,

But he firmly refused and at last they departed,
While the greedy old crow for the dining-room started,
And the pie so delicious he piled on his plate,
And he ate, and he ate, and he ate, and he ate!

THE GREEDY OLD RAVEN, BUT GREEDY NO MORE

Well, next morn when the 'possum and 'coon passed along
They could see at the raven's that something was wrong,
For no blue curling smoke from the chimney-top came;
So they opened his door and they called out his name,
And they entered inside, and behold! on the floor
Was the greedy old raven, but greedy no more:

For his heart it was still—not a flutter was there—
And his toes were turned up and the table was bare;
Now his epitaph tells to the whole country-side
How he ate, and he ate, and he ate till he died.

When Mr. Crow finished, Mr. Rabbit said it was certainly an interesting poem, and if he just had a chance now to eat till he died he'd take it, and Mr. 'Coon said he'd give anything to know how that pie had tasted, and he didn't see how any *one* pie could be big enough to kill anybody that felt as hungry as *he* did now. And Mr. 'Possum didn't say much of anything, but only seemed drowsy and peaceful-like, which was curious for *him* as things were.

Well, all that day, and the next day, and the next, there wasn't anything to eat, and they sat as close as they could around the little fire and wished they'd saved some of the big logs and some of the food, too, that they had used up so fast when they thought the big snow would go away. And the bark of Old Hungry-Wolf got louder and louder, and he began to gnaw, too, and they all heard it, day and night—all except Mr. 'Possum, who said he didn't know why, but that for some reason he couldn't hear a sound like that at all, which was *very* strange, indeed.

But there was something else about Mr. 'Possum that was strange. He didn't get any thinner. All the others began to show the change right away, but Mr. 'Possum still

looked the same, and still kept cheerful, and stepped around as lively as ever, and that was *very strange.*

By-and-by, when Mr. 'Possum had gone down-stairs for some barrel staves to burn, for the wood was all gone, Mr. Rabbit spoke of it, and said he couldn't understand it; and then Mr. 'Coon, who had been thinking about it too, said he wondered why it sometimes took Mr. 'Possum so long to get a little bit of wood. Then they all remembered how Mr. 'Possum had stayed so long down-stairs whenever he went, even before Old Hungry-Wolf came to the Hollow Tree, and they couldn't understand it *at all.*

And just then Mr. 'Possum came up with two little barrel staves which he had been a long time getting, and they all turned and looked at him very closely, which was a thing they had never done until that time. And before Mr. 'Possum noticed it, they saw him chew—a kind of last, finishing chew—and then give a little swallow—a sort of last, finishing swallow—and just then he noticed them watching him, and he stopped right in his tracks and dropped the two little barrel staves and looked very scared and guilty, which was strange, when he had always been so willing about the wood.

Then they all got up out of their chairs and looked straight at Mr. 'Possum, and said:

"What was that you were chewing just now?"

And Mr. 'Possum couldn't say a word.

LOOKED STRAIGHT AT MR. 'POSSUM AND SAID, "WHAT WAS THAT YOU WERE CHEWING JUST NOW?"

Then they all said:

"What was that you were swallowing just now?"

And Mr. 'Possum couldn't say a word.

Then they all said:

"Why do you always stay so long when you go for wood?"

And Mr. 'Possum couldn't say a word.

Then they all said:

"Why is it that you don't get thin, like the rest of us?"

And Mr. 'Possum couldn't say a word.

Then they all said:

"Why is it you never hear the bark of Old Hungry-Wolf?"

And Mr. 'Possum said, very weakly:

"I did think I heard it a little while ago."

Then they all said:

"And was that why you went down after wood?"

And once more Mr. 'Possum couldn't say a word.

Then they all said:

"What have you got *down there* to eat? And *where* do you keep it?"

Then Mr. 'Possum seemed to think of something, and picked up the two little barrel staves and brought them over to the fire and put them on, and looked very friendly, and sat down and lit his pipe and smoked a minute, and said that climbing the stairs had overcome him a little, and that

he wasn't feeling very well, but if they'd let him breathe a minute he'd tell them all about it, and how he had been preparing a nice surprise for them, for just such a time as this; but when he saw they had found out something, it all came on him so sudden that, what with climbing the stairs and all, he couldn't quite gather himself, but that he was all right now, and the surprise was ready.

"Of course you know," Mr. 'Possum said, "that I have travelled a good deal, and have seen a good many kinds of things happen, and know about what to expect. And when I saw how fast we were using up the food, and how deep the snow was, I knew we might expect a famine that even Mr. Crow's johnny-cake and gravy wouldn't last through; and Mr. Crow mentioned something of the kind once himself, though he seemed to forget it right away again, for he went on giving us just as much as ever. But I didn't forget about it, and right away I began laying aside in a quiet place some of the things that would keep pretty well, and that we would be glad to have when Old Hungry-Wolf should really come along and we had learned to live on lighter meals and could make things last."

Mr. 'Possum was going right on, but Mr. 'Coon interrupted him, and said that Mr. 'Possum could call it living on lighter meals if he wanted to but that he hadn't eaten any meal at all for three days, and that if Mr. 'Possum had

put away anything for a hungry time he wished he'd get it out right now, without any more explaining, for it was food that he wanted and not explanations, and all the others said so too.

Then Mr. 'Possum said he was just coming to that, but he only wished to say a few words about it because they had seemed to think that he was doing something that he shouldn't, when he was really trying to save them from Old Hungry-Wolf, and he said he had kept his surprise as long as he could, so it would last longer, and that he had been pretending not to hear Old Hungry's bark just to keep their spirits up, and he supposed one of the reasons why he hadn't got any thinner was because he hadn't been so worried, and had kept happy in the nice surprise he had all the time, just saving it for when they would begin to need it most. As to what he had been chewing and swallowing when he came up-stairs, Mr. 'Possum said that he had been taking just the least little taste of some of the things to see if they were keeping well—some nice cooked chickens, for instance, from a lot that Mr. Crow had on hand and didn't remember about, and a young turkey or two, and a few ducks, and a bushel or so of apples, and a half a barrel of doughnuts, and—

But Mr. 'Possum didn't get any further, for all the Deep Woods People made a wild scramble for the stairs, with

Mr. 'Possum after them, and when they got down in the store-room he took them behind one of the big roots of the Hollow Tree, and there was a passageway that none of them had ever suspected, and Mr. 'Possum lit a candle and led them through it and out into a sort of cave, and there, sure enough, were all the things he had told them about and some mince-pies besides. And there was even some wood, for Mr. 'Possum had worked hard to lay away a supply of things for a long snowed-in time.

Then all the Hollow Tree People sat right down there and had some of the things, and by-and-by they carried some more up-stairs, and some wood, too, and built up a fine big fire, and lit their pipes and smoked, and forgot everything unpleasant in the world. And they all said how smart and good Mr. 'Possum was to save all that food for the very time when they would need it most, when all the rest of them had been just eating it up as fast as possible and would have been now without a thing in the world except for Mr. 'Possum.

Then Mr. 'Possum asked them if they could hear Old Hungry-Wolf any more, and they listened but they couldn't hear a sound, and then they went up into Mr. Crow's room, and into Mr. 'Coon's room, and into Mr. 'Possum's room, and they couldn't see a thing of him anywhere, though it was just the time of day to see him, for it was late in the

evening—the time Old Hungry-Wolf is most likely to look in the window.

And that night it turned warm, and the big snow began to thaw; and it thawed, and it thawed, and all the brooks and rivers came up, and even the Wide Blue Water rose so that the Deep Woods Company had to stay a little longer in the Hollow Tree, even when all the snow was nearly gone. Mr. Rabbit was pretty anxious to get home, and started out one afternoon with Mr. Turtle along, because Mr. Turtle is a good swimmer. But there was too much water to cross and they came back again just at sunset, and Mr. Crow let them in,* so they had to wait several days longer. But Mr. 'Possum's food lasted, and by the time it was gone they could get plenty more; and when they all went away and left the three Hollow Tree People together again, they were very happy because they had had such a good time; and the 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow were as good friends as ever, though the gray feathers on the top of Mr. Crow's head never did turn quite black again, and some of the Deep Woods People call him "Silver-Top" to this day.

The Little Lady looks anxiously at the Story Teller.

"Did Old Hungry-Wolf ever get inside of the Hollow Tree?" she asks.

* See picture on cover.

"No, he never did get inside; they only saw him through the window, and heard him bark."

"And why couldn't Mr. 'Possum ever hear him sometimes?"

"Well, you see, Old Hungry isn't a real wolf, but only a shadow wolf—the shadow of famine. He only looks in when people dread famine, and he only barks and gnaws when they feel it. A famine, you know, is when one is very hungry and there is nothing to eat. I don't think Mr. 'Possum was very hungry, and he had all those nice things laid away, so he would not care much about that old shadow wolf, which is only another name for hunger."

The Little Lady clings very close to the Story Teller.

"Will we ever see Old Hungry-Wolf and hear his bark?"

The Story Teller sits up quite straight, and gathers the Little Lady tight.

"Good gracious, no!" he says. "He moved out of our part of the country before you were born, and we'll take good care that he doesn't come back any more."

"I'm glad," says the Little Lady. You can sing now—you know—the 'Hollow Tree Song.'"

AN EARLY SPRING CALL ON MR. BEAR

AN EARLY SPRING CALL ON MR. BEAR

MR. 'POSSUM'S CURIOUS DREAM AND WHAT CAME OF IT

"WHAT did they do then?" asks the Little Lady. "What did the Deep Woods People all do after they got through being snowed in?"

"Well, let's see. **It** got to be spring then pretty soon—early spring—of course, and Mr. Jack Rabbit went to writing poetry and making garden; Mr. Robin went to meet Mrs. Robin, who had been spending the winter down South; Mr. Squirrel, who is quite young, went to call on a very nice young Miss Squirrel over toward the Big West Hills; Mr. Dog had to help Mr. Man a good deal with the spring work; Mr. Turtle got out all his fishing-things and looked them over, and the Hollow Tree People had a general straightening up after company. They had a big house-cleaning, of course, with most of their things out on the line, and Mr. 'Possum said that he'd just about as soon be snowed-in for

good as to have to beat carpets and carry furniture up and down stairs all the rest of his life."

But they got through at last, and everything was nice when they were settled, only there wasn't a great deal to be had to eat, because it had been such a long, cold winter that things were pretty scarce and hard to get.

One morning Mr. 'Possum said he had had a dream the night before, and he wished it would come true. He said he had dreamed that they were all invited by Mr. Bear to help him eat the spring breakfast which he takes after his long winter nap, and that Mr. Bear had about the best breakfast he ever sat down to. He said he had eaten it clear through, from turkey to mince-pie, only he didn't get the mince-pie because Mr. Bear had asked him if he'd have it hot or cold, and just as he made up his mind to have some of both he woke up and didn't get either.

Then Mr. 'Coon said he wished he could have a dream like that; that he'd take whatever came along and try to sleep through it, and Mr. Crow thought a little while and said that sometimes dreams came true, especially if you helped them a little. He said he hadn't heard anything of Mr. Bear this spring, and it was quite likely he had been taking a longer nap than usual. It might be a good plan, he thought, to drop over that way and just look in in passing, because if Mr. Bear should be sitting down to breakfast

he would be pretty apt to ask them to sit up and have a bite while they told him the winter news.

Then Mr. 'Possum said that he didn't believe anybody in the world but Mr. Crow would have thought of that, and that hereafter he was going to tell him every dream he had. They ought to start right away, he said, because if they should get there just as Mr. Bear was clearing off the table it would be a good deal worse than not getting the mince-pie in his dream.

So they hurried up and put on their best clothes and started for Mr. Bear's place, which is over toward the Edge of the World, only farther down, in a fine big cave which is fixed up as nice as a house and nicer. But when they got pretty close to it they didn't go so fast and straight, but just sauntered along as if they were only out for a little walk and happened to go in that direction, for they thought Mr. Bear might be awake and standing in his door.

They met Mr. Rabbit about that time and invited him to go along, but Mr. Rabbit said his friendship with Mr. Bear was a rather distant one, and that he mostly talked to him from across the river or from a hill that had a good clear running space on the other slope. He said Mr. Bear's taste was good, for he was fond of his family, but that the fondness had been all on Mr. Bear's side.

So the Hollow Tree People went along, saying what a nice

THEY WENT ALONG, SAYING WHAT A NICE MAN THEY THOUGHT MR. BEAR WAS

man they thought Mr. Bear was, and saying it quite loud, and looking every which way, because Mr. Bear might be out for a walk too.

But they didn't see him anywhere, and by-and-by they got right to the door of his cave and knocked a little, and nobody came. Then they listened, but couldn't hear anything at first, until Mr. 'Coon, who has very sharp ears, said that he was sure he heard Mr. Bear breathing and that he must be still asleep. Then the others thought they heard it, too, and pretty soon they were sure they heard it, and Mr. 'Possum said it was too bad to let Mr. Bear oversleep himself this fine weather, and that they ought to go in and let him know how late it was.

So then they pushed open the door and went tiptoeing in to where Mr. Bear was. They thought, of course, he would be in bed, but he wasn't. He was sitting up in a big armchair in his dressing-gown, with his feet up on a low stool, before a fire that had gone out some time in December, with a little table by him that had a candle on it which had burned down about the time the fire went out. His pipe had gone out too, and they knew that Mr. Bear had been smoking, and must have been very tired and gone to sleep right where he was, and hadn't moved all winter long.

It wasn't very cheerful in there, so Mr. 'Possum said maybe they'd better stir up a little fire to take the chill off

MR. BEAR MUST HAVE BEEN VERY TIRED AND GONE TO SLEEP RIGHT WHERE HE WAS

before they woke Mr. Bear, and Mr. 'Coon found a fresh candle and lighted it, and Mr. Crow put the room to rights a little, and wound up the clock, and set it, and started it going. Then when the fire got nice and bright they stood around and looked at Mr. Bear, and each one said it was a good time now to wake him up, but nobody just wanted to do it, because Mr. Bear isn't always good-natured, and nobody could tell what might happen if he should wake up cross and hungry, and he'd be likely to do that if his nap was broken too suddenly. Mr. 'Possum said that Mr. Crow was the one to do it, as he had first thought of this trip, and Mr. Crow said that it was Mr. 'Possum's place, because it had been in his dream. Then they both said that as Mr. 'Coon hadn't done anything at all so far, he might do that.

Mr. 'Coon said that he'd do it quick enough, only he'd been listening to the way Mr. Bear breathed, and he was pretty sure he wouldn't be ready to wake up for a week yet, and it would be too bad to wake him now when he might not have been resting well during the first month or so of his nap and was making it up now. He said they could look around a little and see if Mr. Bear's things were keeping well, and perhaps brush up his pantry so it would be nice and clean when he did wake.

Then Mr. Crow said he'd always wanted to see Mr. Bear's pantry, for he'd heard it was such a good place to

keep things, and perhaps he could get some ideas for the Hollow Tree; and Mr. 'Possum said that Mr. Bear had the name of having a bigger pantry and more things in it than all the rest of the Deep Woods People put together.

So they left Mr. Bear all nice and comfortable, sleeping there by the fire, and lit another candle and went over to his pantry, which was at the other side of the room, and opened the door and looked in.

Well, they couldn't say a word at first, but only just looked at one another and at all the things they saw in that pantry. First, on the top shelf there was a row of pies, clear around. Then on the next shelf there was a row of cakes—first a fruit-cake, then a jelly-cake, then another fruit-cake and then another jelly-cake, and the cakes went all the way around, too, and some of them had frosting on them, and you could see the raisins in the fruit-cake and pieces of citron. Then on the next shelf there was a row of nice cooked partridges, all the way around, close together. And on the shelf below was a row of meat-pies made of chicken and turkey and young lamb, and on the shelf below that there was a row of nice canned berries, and on the floor, all the way around, there were jars of honey—nice comb honey that Mr. Bear had gathered in November from bee-trees.

Mr. Crow spoke first.

"Well, I never," he said, "never in all my life, saw anything like it!"

And Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum both said:

"He can't do it—a breakfast like that is too much for *any* bear!"

Then Mr. Crow said:

"He oughtn't to be *allowed* to do it. Mr. Bear is too nice a man to lose."

And Mr. 'Possum said:

"He *mustn't* be allowed to do it—we'll help him."

"Where do you suppose he begins?" said Mr. 'Coon.

"At the top, very likely," said Mr. Crow. "He's got it arranged in courses."

"I don't care where he begins," said Mr. 'Possum; "I'm going to begin somewhere, now, and I think I will begin on a meat-pie."

And Mr. Crow said he thought he'd begin on a nice partridge, and Mr. 'Coon said he believed he'd try a mince-pie or two first, as a kind of a lining, and then fill in with the solid things afterward.

So then Mr. 'Possum took down his meat-pie, and said he hoped this wasn't a dream, and Mr. Crow took down a nice brown partridge, and Mr. 'Coon stood up on a chair and slipped a mince-pie out of a pan on the top shelf, and everything would have been all right, only he lost his balance a

little and let the pie fall. It made quite a smack when it struck the floor, and Mr. 'Possum jumped and let his pie fall, too, and that made a good deal more of a noise, because it was large and in a tin pan.

Then Mr. Crow blew out the light quick, and they all stood perfectly still and listened, for it seemed to them a noise like that would wake the dead, much more Mr. Bear, and they thought he would be right up and in there after them.

But Mr. Bear was too sound asleep for that. They heard him give a little cough and a kind of a grunt mixed with a sleepy word or two, and when they peeked out through the door, which was open just a little ways, they saw him moving about in his chair, trying first one side and then the other, as if he wanted to settle down and go to sleep again, which he didn't do, but kept right on grunting and sniffing and mumbling and trying new positions.

Then, of course, the Hollow Tree People were scared, for they knew pretty well he was going to wake up. There wasn't any way to get out of Mr. Bear's pantry except by the door, and you had to go right by Mr. Bear's chair to get out of the cave. So they just stood there, holding their breath and trembling, and Mr. 'Possum wished now it *was* a dream, and that he could wake up right away before the nightmare began.

Well, Mr. Bear he turned this way and that way, and once or twice seemed about to settle down and sleep again; but just as they thought he really had done it, he sat up pretty straight and looked all around.

Then the Hollow Tree People thought their time had come, and they wanted to make a jump, and run for the door, only they were afraid to try it. Mr. Bear yawned a long yawn, and stretched himself, and rubbed his eyes open, and looked over at the fire and down at the candle on the table and up at the clock on the mantel. The 'Coon and 'Possum and the Old Black Crow thought, of course, he'd know somebody had been there by all those things being set going, and they expected him to roar out something terrible and start for the pantry first thing.

But Mr. Bear didn't seem to understand it at all, or to suppose that anything was wrong, and from what he mumbled to himself they saw right away that he thought he'd been asleep only a little while instead of all winter long.

"Humph!" they heard him growl, "I must have gone to sleep, and was dreaming it's time to wake up. I didn't sleep long, though, by the way the fire and the candle look, besides it's only a quarter of ten, and I remember winding the clock at half after eight. Funny I feel so hungry, after eating a big supper only two hours ago. Must be the reason I

dreamed it was spring. Humph! guess I'll just eat a piece of pie and go to bed."

So Mr. Bear got up and held on to his chair to steady himself, and yawned some more and rubbed his eyes, for he was only about half awake yet, and pretty soon he picked up his candle and started for the pantry.

Then the Hollow Tree People felt as if they were going to die. They didn't dare to breathe or make the least bit of noise, and just huddled back in a corner close to the wall, and Mr. 'Possum all at once felt as if he must sneeze right away, and Mr. 'Coon would have given anything to be able to scratch his back, and Mr. Crow thought if he could only cough once more and clear his throat he wouldn't care whether he had anything to eat, ever again.

And Mr. Bear he came shuffling along toward the pantry with his candle all tipped to one side, still rubbing his eyes and trying to wake up, and everything was just as still as still—all except a little scratchy sound his claws made dragging along the floor, though that wasn't a nice sound for the Hollow Tree People to hear. And when he came to the pantry door Mr. Bear pushed it open quite wide and was coming straight in, only just then he caught his toe a little on the door-sill and *stumbled* in, and that was too much for Mr. 'Possum, who turned loose a sneeze that shook the world

Then Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon made a dive under Mr. Bear's legs, and Mr. 'Possum did too, and down came Mr. Bear and down came his candle, and the candle went out, but not any quicker than the Hollow Tree People, who broke for the cave door and slammed it behind them, and struck out for the bushes as if they thought they'd never live to get there.

But when they got into some thick hazel brush they stopped a minute to breathe, and then they all heard Mr. Bear calling "Help! Help!" as loud as he could, and when they listened they heard him mention something about an earthquake and that the world was coming to an end.

Then Mr. 'Possum said that from the sound of Mr. Bear's voice he seemed to be unhappy about something, and that it was too bad for them to just pass right by without asking what was the trouble, especially if Mr. Bear, who had always been so friendly, should ever hear of it. So then they straightened their collars and ties and knocked the dust off a little, and Mr. 'Coon scratched his back against a little bush and Mr. Crow cleared his throat, and they stepped out of the hazel patch and went up to Mr. Bear's door and pushed it open a little and called out:

"Oh, Mr. Bear, do you need any help?"

"Oh yes," groaned Mr. Bear, "come quick! I've been struck by an earthquake and nearly killed, and everything

MR. 'COON SCRATCHED HIS BACK AGAINST A LITTLE BUSH

I've got must be ruined. Bring a light and look at my pantry!"

So then Mr. Coon ran with a splinter from Mr. Bear's fire and lit the candle, and Mr. Bear got up, rubbing himself and taking on, and began looking at his pantry shelves, which made him better right away.

"Oh," he said, "how lucky the damage is so small! Only two pies and a partridge knocked down, and they are not much hurt. I thought everything was lost, and my nerves are all upset when I was getting ready for my winter sleep. How glad I am you happened to be passing. Stay with me, and we will eat to quiet our nerves."

Then the Hollow Tree People said that the earthquake had made them nervous too, and that perhaps a little food would be good for all of them; so they flew around just as if they were at home, and brought Mr. Bear's table right into the pantry, and some chairs, and set out the very best things and told Mr. Bear to sit right up to the table and help himself, and then all the others sat up, too, and they ate everything clear through, from meat-pie to mince-pie, just as if Mr. 'Possum's dream had really come true.

And Mr. Bear said he didn't understand how he could have such a good appetite when he had such a big supper only two hours ago, and he said that there must have been two earthquakes, because a noise of some kind had roused

him from a little nap he had been taking in his chair, but that the real earthquake hadn't happened until he got to the pantry door, where he stumbled a little, which seemed to touch it off. He said he hoped he'd never live to go through with a thing like that again.

Then the Hollow Tree People said they had heard both of the shocks, and that the last one was a good deal the worst, and that of course such a thing would sound a good deal louder in a cave anyway. And by-and-by, when they were all through eating, they went in by the fire and sat down and smoked, and Mr. Bear said he didn't feel as sleepy as he thought he should because he was still upset a good deal by the shock, but that he guessed he would just crawl into bed while they were there, as it seemed nice to have company.

So he did, and by-and-by he dropped off to sleep again, and the Hollow Tree People borrowed a few things, and went out softly and shut the door behind them. They stopped at Mr. Rabbit's house on the way home, and told him they had enjoyed a nice breakfast with Mr. Bear, and how Mr. Bear had sent a partridge and a pie and a little pot of honey to Mr. Rabbit because of his fondness for the family. Then Mr. Rabbit felt quite pleased, because it was too early for spring vegetables and hard to get good things for the table.

"And did Mr. Bear sleep all summer?" asks the Little Lady.

No, he woke up again pretty soon, for he had finished

MR. RABBIT THANKED HIM FROM ACROSS THE RIVER

his nap, and of course the next time when he looked around he found his fire out and the candle burned down and the clock stopped, so he got up and went outside, and saw it was spring and that he had slept a good deal longer than usual. But when he went to eat his spring breakfast he couldn't understand why he wasn't very hungry, and thought it must be because he'd eaten two such big suppers.

"But why didn't the Hollow Tree People tell him it was spring and not let him go to bed again?"

Well, I s'pose they thought it wouldn't be very polite to tell Mr. Bear how he'd been fooled, and, besides, he needed a nice nap again after the earthquake—anyhow, he thought it was an earthquake, and was a good deal upset.

And it was a long time before he found out what *had really* happened, and he never would have known, if Mr. Rabbit hadn't seen him fishing one day and thanked him from across the river for the nice breakfast he had sent him by the Hollow Tree People.

That set Mr. Bear to thinking, and he asked Mr. Rabbit a few questions about things in general and earthquakes in particular, and the more he found out and thought about it the more he began to guess just how it was, and by-and-by when he did find out all about it, he didn't care any more, and really thought it quite a good joke on himself for falling asleep in his chair and sleeping there all winter long.

MR. CROW'S GARDEN

MR. CROW'S GARDEN

THE HOLLOW TREE PEOPLE LEARN HOW TO RAISE FINE VEGETABLES

ONE morning, right after breakfast in the Hollow Tree, Mr. Crow said he'd been thinking of something ever since he woke up, and if the 'Coon and the 'Possum thought it was a good plan he believed he'd do it. He said of course they knew how good Mr. Rabbit's garden always was, and how he nearly lived out of it during the summer, Mr. Rabbit being a good deal of a vegetarian; by which he meant that he liked vegetables better than anything, while the Hollow Tree People, Mr. Crow said, were a little different in their tastes, though he didn't know just what the name for them was. He said he thought they might be humanitarians, because they liked the things that Mr. Man and other human beings liked, but that he wasn't sure whether that was the right name or not.

Then Mr. 'Possum said for him to never mind about the word, but to go on and talk about his plan if it had any-

thing to do with something to eat, for he was getting pretty tired of living on little picked-up things such as they had been having this hard spring, and Mr. 'Coon said so too. So then Mr. Crow said:

"Well, I've been planning to have a garden this spring like Mr. Rabbit's."

"Humph!" said Mr. 'Possum, "I thought you were going to start a chicken farm."

But Mr. Crow said "No," that the Big Deep Woods didn't seem a healthy place for chickens, and that they could pick up a chicken here and there by-and-by, and then if they had nice green pease to go with it, or some green corn, or even a tender salad, it would help out, especially when they had company like Mr. Robin, or Mr. Squirrel, or Mr. Rabbit, who cared for such things.

So then the 'Coon and the 'Possum both said that to have green pease and corn was a very good idea, especially when such things were mixed with young chickens with plenty of dressing and gravy, and that as this was a pleasant morning they might walk over and call on Jack Rabbit so that the Old Black Crow could find out about planting things. Mr. 'Possum said that his uncle Silas Lovejoy always had a garden, and he had worked it a good deal when he was young, but that he had forgotten just how things should be planted, though he knew the moon had something to do

with it, and if you didn't get the time right the things that ought to grow up would grow down and the down things would all grow up, so that you'd have to dig your pease and pick your potatoes when the other way was the fashion and thought to be better in this climate.

So then the Hollow Tree People put on their things and went out into the nice April sunshine and walked over to Jack Rabbit's house, saying how pleasant it was to take a little walk this way when everything was getting green, and they passed by where Mr. and Mrs. Robin were building a new nest, and they looked in on a cozy little hollow tree where Mr. Squirrel, who had just brought home a young wife from over by the Big West Hills, had set up housekeeping with everything new except the old-fashioned feather-bed and home-made spread which Miss Squirrel had been given by her folks. They looked through Mr. Squirrel's house and said how snug it was, and that perhaps it would be better not to try to furnish it too much at once, as it was nice just to get things as one was able, instead of doing everything at the start.

When they got to Mr. Rabbit's house he was weaving a rag carpet for his front room, and they all stood behind him and watched him weave, and by-and-by Mr. 'Coon wanted to try it, but he didn't know how to run the treadle exactly, and got some of the strands too loose and some too tight,

so he gave it up, and they all went out to look at Mr. Rabbit's garden.

Well, Mr. Rabbit did have a nice garden. It was all laid out in rows, and was straight and trim, and there wasn't a weed anywhere. He had things up, too—pease and lettuce and radishes—and he had some tomato-plants growing in a box in the house, because it was too early to put them out.

Mr. Rabbit said that a good many people bought their plants, but that he always liked to raise his own from seed, because then he knew just what they were and what to expect. He told them how to plant the different things and about the moon, and said there was an old adage in his family that if you remembered it you'd always plant at the right time. The adage, he said, was:

> "Pease and beans in the light of the moon—
> Both in the pot before it's June."

And of course you only had to change "light" to "dark" and use it for turnips and potatoes and such things, though really it was sometimes later than June, but June was near enough, and rhymed with "moon" better than July and August. He said he would give Mr. Crow all the seeds he wanted, and that when he was ready to put out tomatoes he would let him have plenty of plants too.

Then Mr. 'Coon said it would be nice to have a few flower seeds, and they all looked at Mr. 'Coon because they knew he had once been in love, and they thought by his wanting flowers that he might be going to get that way again.

But Mr. Rabbit said he was fond of flowers, too, especially the old-fashioned kind, and he picked out some for Mr.'Coon; and then he went to weaving again, and the Hollow Tree People watched him awhile, and he pointed out pieces of different clothes he had had that he was weaving into his carpet, and they all thought how nice it was to use up one's old things that way.

Then by-and-by the Hollow Tree People went back home, and they began their garden right away. It was just the kind of a day to make garden and they all felt like it, so they spaded and hoed and raked, and didn't find it very easy because the place had never been used for a garden before, and there were some roots and stones; and pretty soon Mr. 'Possum said that Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon might go on with the digging and he would plant the seeds, as he had been used to such work when he lived with his uncle Silas as a boy.

So then he took the seeds, but he couldn't remember Mr. Rabbit's adages which told whether beets and carrots and such things as grow below the ground had to be planted in the dark of the moon or the light of the moon, and it was

the same about beans and pease and the things that grow above the ground; and when he spoke to Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon about it, one said it was one way and the other the other way, and then Mr. 'Possum said he wasn't planting the things in the moon anyhow, and he thought Mr. Rabbit had made the adages to suit the day he was going to plant and that they would work either way.

So then Mr. 'Possum planted everything there was, and showed Mr. 'Coon how to plant his flower seeds; and when they were all done they stood off and admired their nice garden, and said it was just about as nice as Jack Rabbit's, and maybe nicer in some ways, because it had trees around it and was a pleasant place to work.

Well, after that they got up every morning and went out to look at their garden, to see if any of the things were coming up; and pretty soon they found a good *many* things coming up, but they were not in hills and rows, and Mr. 'Possum said they were weeds, because he remembered that Uncle Silas's weeds had always looked like those, and how he and his little cousins had had to hoe them. So then they got their hoes and hoed every morning, and by-and-by they had to hoe some during the day too, to keep up with the weeds, and the sun was pretty hot, and Mr. 'Possum did most of his hoeing over by the trees where it wasn't so sunny, and said that hereafter he thought it

ONE SAID IT WAS ONE WAY AND THE OTHER THE OTHER WAY

would be a good plan to plant all their garden in the shade.

And every day they kept looking for the seeds to come up, and by-and-by a few did come up, and then they were quite proud, and went over and told Jack Rabbit about it, and Mr. Rabbit came over to give them some advice, and said he thought their garden looked pretty well for being its first year and put in late, though it looked to him, he said, as if some of it had been planted the wrong time of the moon, and he didn't think so much shade was very good for most things.

But Mr. 'Possum said he'd rather have more shade and less things, and he thought next year he'd let his part of the garden out on shares.

Well, it got hotter and hotter, and the weeds grew more and more, and the Hollow Tree People had to work and hoe and pull nearly all day in the sun to keep up with them, and they would have given it up pretty soon, only they wanted to show Jack Rabbit that they could have a garden too, and by-and-by, when their things got big enough to eat, they were so proud that they invited Mr. Rabbit to come over for dinner, and they sent word to Mr. Turtle, too, because he likes good things and lives alone, not being a family man like Mr. Robin and Mr. Squirrel.

Now of course the Hollow Tree People knew that they

had no such fine things in their garden as Jack Rabbit had in his, and they said they couldn't expect to, but they'd try to have other things to make up; and Mr. Crow was cooking for two whole days getting his chicken-pies and his puddings and such things ready for that dinner. And then when the morning came for it he was out long before sun-up to pick the things in the garden while they were nice and fresh, with the dew on them.

But when Mr. Crow looked over his garden he felt pretty bad, for, after all, the new potatoes were little and tough, and the pease were small and dry, and the beans were thin and stringy, and the salad was pretty puny and tasteless, and the corn was just nubbins, because it didn't grow in a very good place and maybe hadn't been planted or tended very well. So Mr. Crow walked up and down the rows and thought a good deal, and finally decided that he'd just take a walk over toward Jack Rabbit's garden to see if Mr. Rabbit's things were really so much better after all.

It was just about sunrise, and Mr. Crow knew Jack Rabbit didn't get up so soon, and he made up his mind he wouldn't wake him when he got there, but would just take a look over his nice garden and come away again. So when he got to Mr. Rabbit's back fence he climbed through a crack, and sat down in the weeds to rest a little and to look around, and he saw that Mr. Rabbit's house was just as still

and closed up as could be, and no signs of Jack Rabbit anywhere.

So then Mr. Crow stepped out into the corn patch and looked along at the rows of fine roasting ears, which made him feel sad because of those little nubbins in his own garden, and then he saw the fine fat pease and beans and salads in Jack Rabbit's garden, and it seemed to him that Mr. Rabbit could never in the world use up all those things himself.

Then Mr. Crow decided that he would thin out a few of Jack Rabbit's things, which seemed to be too thick anyway to do well. It would be too bad to disturb Mr. Rabbit to tell him about it, and Mr. Crow didn't have time to wait for him to get up if he was going to get his dinner ready on time.

So Mr. Crow picked some large ears of corn and some of Mr. Rabbit's best pease and beans and salads, and filled his apron with all he could carry, and climbed through the back fence again, and took out for home without wasting any more time. And when he got there Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum were just getting up, and he didn't bother to tell them about borrowing from Mr. Rabbit's garden, but set out some breakfast, and as soon as it was over pitched in to get ready for company. Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Possum flew around, too, to make the room look nice, and by-and-by everything was ready, and the table was set, and the Hollow Tree People were all dressed up and looking out the window.

MR. CROW DECIDED TO THIN OUT A FEW OF JACK RABBIT'S THINGS

Then pretty soon they saw Mr. Turtle coming through the timber, and just then Jack Rabbit came in sight from the other direction. Mr. Turtle had brought a basket of mussels, which always are nice with a big dinner, like oysters, and Mr. Rabbit said he would have brought some things out of his garden, only he knew the Hollow Tree People had a garden, too, this year, and would want to show what they could do in that line themselves. He said he certainly must take a look at their garden because he had heard a good deal about it from Mr. Robin.

Then Mr. Crow felt a little chilly, for he happened to think that if Mr. Rabbit went out into their garden and then saw the fine things which were going to be on the table he'd wonder where they came from. So he said right away that dinner was all ready, and they'd better sit down while things were hot and fresh.

Then they all sat down, and first had the mussels which Mr. Turtle had brought, and there were some fine sliced tomatoes with them, and Mr. Rabbit said he hadn't supposed that such fine big tomatoes as those could come out of a new garden that had been planted late, and that he certainly must see the vines they came off of before he went home, because they were just as big as his tomatoes, if not bigger, and he wanted to see just how they could do so well.

And Mr. Crow felt *real* chilly, and Mr. 'Coon and Mr. 'Pos-

sum both said they hadn't supposed their tomatoes were so big and ripe, though they hadn't looked at them since yesterday. But Mr. Rabbit said that a good many things could happen over night, and Mr. Crow changed the subject as quick as he could, and said that things always looked bigger and better on the table than they did in the garden, but that he'd picked all the real big, ripe tomatoes and he didn't think there'd be any more.

Then after the mussels they had the chicken-pie, and when Mr. Rabbit saw the vegetables that Mr. Crow served with it he looked at them and said:

"My, what fine pease and beans, and what splendid corn! I am sure your vegetables are as good as anything in my garden, if not better. I certainly *must see* just the spot where they grew. I would never have believed you could have done it, never, if I hadn't seen them right here on your table with my own eyes."

Then Mr. Turtle said they were the finest he ever tasted, and Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon both said they wouldn't have believed it themselves yesterday, and it was wonderful how much everything had grown over night. Then the Old Black Crow choked a little and coughed, and said he didn't seem to relish his food, and pretty soon he said that of course their garden *had* done *pretty* well, but that it was about through now, as these were things he had been saving for

this dinner, and he had gathered all the biggest and best of them this morning before Mr.'Possum and Mr.'Coon were up.

When Mr. Crow said that, Jack Rabbit looked the other way and made a very queer face, and you might have thought he was trying to keep from laughing if you had seen him, but maybe he was only trying to keep from coughing, for pretty soon he did cough a little and said that the early morning was the proper time to gather vegetables; that one could always pick out the best things then, and do it quietly before folks were up.

Then Mr. Crow felt a cold, shaky chill that went all the way up and down, and he was afraid to look up, though of course he didn't believe Mr. Rabbit knew anything about what he had done, only he was afraid that he would look so guilty that everybody would see it. He said that his head was a little dizzy with being over the hot stove so much, and he hoped they wouldn't think of going out until the cool of the evening, as the sun would be too much for him, and of course he wanted to be with them.

Poor Mr. Crow was almost afraid to bring on the salad, but he was just as afraid not to. Only he did wish he had picked out Mr. Rabbit's smallest bunches instead of his biggest ones, for he knew there were no such other salads anywhere as those very ones he had borrowed from Mr. Rabbit's garden. But he put it off as long as he could, and

MR. CROW WAS ALMOST AFRAID TO BRING ON THE SALAD

by-and-by Jack Rabbit said that there was one thing he was sure the Hollow Tree couldn't beat him on, and that was salad. He said he had never had such fine heads as he had this year, and that there were a few heads especially that he had been saving to show his friends. Then the 'Coon and 'Possum said "No," their salads were not very much, unless they had grown a great deal over night, like the other things—and when Mr. Crow got up to bring them he walked wobbly, and everybody said it was too bad that Mr. Crow *would* always go to so much trouble for company.

Well, when he came in with that bowl of salad and set it down, Mr. Turtle and Jack Rabbit said, "Did you ever in your life!" But Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon just sat and looked at it, for they thought it couldn't be true.

Then pretty soon Mr. Rabbit said that he would take back everything he had told them about his salad, and that he was coming over to take some lessons from the Hollow Tree People, and especially from Mr. Crow, on how to raise vegetables. He said that there were a good many ways to raise vegetables—some raised them in a garden; some raised them in a hothouse; some raised them in the market; but that Mr. Crow's way was the best way there was, and he was coming over to learn it. He said they must finish their dinner before dark, for he certainly must *see* just where *all* Mr. Crow's wonderful things came from.

Then Mr. Crow felt the gray spot on his head getting a good deal grayer, and he dropped his knife and fork, and swallowed two or three times, and tried to smile, though it was a sickly smile. He said that Mr. Rabbit was very kind, but that Mr. 'Possum and Mr. 'Coon had done a good deal of the work, too.

But Jack Rabbit said "No," that nobody but an industrious person like Mr. Crow could have raised *those* vegetables—a person who got up early, he said, and was used to taking a little trouble to get the best things.

Then Mr.Crow went after the dessert, and was glad enough that there were no more vegetables to come, especially of that kind.

And Mr. Rabbit seemed to forget about looking at the garden until they were all through, and then he said that before they went outside he would read a little poem he had composed that morning lying in bed and looking at the sunrise across his own garden. He said he called it:

ME AND MY GARDEN

Oh, it's nice to have a garden
On which to put my labors.
It's nice to have a garden
Especially for my neighbors.

I like to see it growing
When skies are blue above me;
I like to see it gathered
By those who really love me.

I like to think in winter
Of pleasant summer labors;
Oh, it's nice to have a garden
Especially for my neighbors.

Everybody said that was a nice poem and sounded just like Mr. Rabbit, who was always so free-hearted—all except Mr. Crow, who tried to say it was nice, and couldn't. Then Mr. Rabbit said they'd better go out now to see the Hollow Tree garden, but Mr. Crow said really he couldn't stand it yet, and they could see by his looks that he was feeling pretty sick, and Mr. Turtle said it was too bad to think of taking Mr. Crow out in the sun when he had worked so hard.

So then they all sat around and smoked and told stories, and whenever they stopped Mr. Crow thought of something else to do and seemed to get better toward night, and got a great deal better when it got dark, and Mr. Jack Rabbit said all at once that now it was too late to see the Hollow Tree garden, and that he was so sorry, for he knew he could have learned something if he could just have one look at it, for nobody could see those vegetables and that garden without learning a great deal.

JACK RABBIT CAPERED AND LAUGHED ALL THE WAY HOME

Then he said he must go, and Mr. Turtle said he guessed *he* must go too, so they both set out for home, and when Jack Rabbit got out of sight of the Hollow Tree and into a little open moonlight place, he just laid down on the ground and rolled over and laughed and kicked his feet, and sat up and rocked and looked at the moon and laughed; and he capered and laughed all the way home at the good joke he had all to himself on Mr. Crow.

For Mr. Rabbit had been lying awake in bed that morning when Mr. Crow was in his garden, and he had seen Mr. Crow *all* the time.

WHEN JACK RABBIT WAS A LITTLE BOY

WHEN JACK RABBIT WAS A LITTLE BOY

A STORY OF A VERY LONG TIME AGO

THE Little Lady skips first on one foot and then on the other foot, around and around, until pretty soon she tumbles backward into *twelve flower-pots*.

That, of course, makes a great damage, and though the Little Lady herself isn't hurt to speak of, she is frightened very much and has to be comforted by everybody, including the Story Teller, who comes last, and finishes up by telling about something that happened to Jack Rabbit when *he* was little.

Once upon a time, it begins, when Mr. Jack Rabbit was quite small, his mother left him all alone one afternoon while she went across the Wide Grass Lands to visit an old aunt of hers and take her some of the nice blackberries she had been putting up that morning. Mrs. Rabbit had been very busy all the forenoon, and little Jack had been watching her and making believe he was putting up berries too.

And when Mrs. Rabbit got through she had cleaned her stove and polished it as nice as could be; then she gave little Jack Rabbit his dinner, with some of the berries that were left over, and afterward she washed his face and hands and found his blocks for him to play with, besides a new stick of red sealing-wax—the kind she used to seal her cans with; for they did not have patent screw-top cans in those days, but always sealed the covers on with red sealing-wax.

Then Mrs. Rabbit told little Jack that he could play with his blocks, and build houses, with the red stick for a chimney, and to be a good boy until she came home. So little Jack Rabbit promised, and Mrs. Rabbit kissed him twice and took her parasol and her reticule and a can of berries, and started. Little Jack would have gone with her, only it was too far.

Well, after she had left, little Jack played with his blocks and built houses and set the stick of sealing-wax up for a brick chimney, and by-and-by he played he was canning fruit, and he wished he could have a little stove and little cans and a little stick of sealing-wax, so he could really do it all just as she did.

Then little Jack Rabbit looked at the nice polished stove and wondered how it would be to use that, and to build a little fire in it—just a *little* fire—which would make every-

TOOK HER PARASOL AND HER RETICULE AND A CAN OF BERRIES, AND STARTED

thing seem a good deal more real, he thought, than his make-believe stove of blocks.

And pretty soon little Jack opened the stove door and looked in, and when he stirred the ashes there were still a few live coals there, and when he put in some shavings they blazed up, and when he put in some pieces of old shingles and things they blazed up too, and when he put in some of Mrs. Rabbit's nice dry wood the stove got *quite hot!*

Then little Jack Rabbit became somewhat frightened, for he had only meant to make a very small fire, and he thought this might turn into a big fire. Also, he remembered some things his mother had told him about playing with fire and about *never going near a hot stove.* He thought he'd better open the stove door a little to see if the fire was getting too big, but he was afraid to touch it with his fingers for fear of burning them. He had seen his mother use a stick or something to open the stove door when it was hot, so he picked up the first thing that came handy, which was the stick of sealing-wax. But when he touched it to the hot door the red stick sputtered a little and left a bright red spot on the stove door.

Then little Jack forgot all about putting up blackberries, admiring that beautiful red spot on the shiny black stove, and thinking how nice it would be to make some more like

AND HE MADE SOME STRIPES, TOO—MOSTLY ON TOP OF THE STOVE

it, which he thought would improve the looks of the stove a great deal.

So then he touched it again in another place and made another spot, and in another place and made another spot, and in a lot of places and made a lot of spots, and he made some stripes, too—mostly on top of the stove, which was nice and smooth to mark on, though he made *some* on the pipe. You would hardly have known it was the same stove when he got all through, and little Jack thought how beautiful it was and how pleased his mother would be when she got home and *saw* it. But then right away he happened to think that perhaps she might not be so pleased after all, and the more he thought about it the more sure he was that she wouldn't like her nice red-striped and spotted stove as well as a black one; and, besides, she had told him *never* to play with fire.

And just at that moment Mrs. Rabbit herself stepped in the door! And when she looked at her red-spotted and striped stove and then at little Jack Rabbit, little Jack knew perfectly well without her saying a single word that she wasn't *at all pleased*. So he began to cry very loud, and started to run, and tripped over his blocks and fell against a little stand-table that had Mrs. Rabbit's work-basket on it (for Mrs. Rabbit always knit or sewed while she was cooking anything), and all the spools and buttons and knitting-

LITTLE JACK KNEW PERFECTLY WELL THAT SHE WASN'T AT ALL PLEASED

work went tumbling, with little Jack Rabbit right among them, holloing, "Oh, I'm killed! I'm killed!"—just sprawling there on the floor, afraid to get up, and expecting every minute his mother would do something awful.

But Mrs. Rabbit just stood and looked at him over her spectacles and then at her red-spotted and striped stove, and pretty soon she said:

"Well, this is a lovely mess to come home to!"

Which of course made little Jack take on a good deal worse and keep on bawling out that he was killed, until Mrs. Rabbit told him that he was making a good deal of noise for a *dead* man, and that if he'd get up and pick up all the things he'd upset maybe he'd come to life again.

Then little Jack Rabbit got up and ran to his mother and cried against her best dress and got some tears on it, and Mrs. Rabbit sat down in her rocker and looked at her stove and rocked him until he felt better. And by-and-by she changed her dress and went to cleaning her stove while little Jack picked up all the things—all the spools and buttons and needles and knitting-work—every single thing.

And after supper, when he said his prayers and went to bed, he promised never to disobey his mother again.

PROMISED NEVER TO DISOBEY HIS MOTHER AGAIN

A HOLLOW TREE PICNIC

A HOLLOW TREE PICNIC

THE LITTLE LADY AND THE STORY TELLER, AND THEIR FRIENDS

NOT far from the House of Low Ceilings, which stands on the borders of the Big Deep Woods, there is a still smaller house, where, in summertime, the Story Teller goes to make up things and write them down.

And one warm day he is writing away and not noticing what time it is when he thinks he hears somebody step in the door. So then he looks around, and he sees a little straw hat and a little round red face under it, and then he sees a basket, and right away he knows it is the Little Lady. And the Little Lady says:

"I've brought the picnic—did you know it?"

"Why, no!" the Story Teller says, looking surprised. "Is it time?"

"Yes, and I've got huckleberries and cream, and some hot biscuits."

"Good gracious! Let's see!"

So then the Story Teller looks, and, sure enough, there they are, and more things, too; and pretty soon the Little Lady and he go down to a very quiet place under some hemlock-trees by a big rock where there is a clear brook and a spring close by, and they sit down, and the Little Lady spreads the picnic all out—and there is ham too, and bread-and-butter, and doughnuts—and they are so hungry that they eat everything, and both dip into one bowl when they get to huckleberries and cream.

Then the Little Lady says:

"Now tell me about the Hollow Tree People; they have picnics, too."

"Sure enough, they do. And I think I'll have to tell you about their very last picnic and what happened."

Well, once upon a time Mr. 'Possum said that he was getting tired of sitting down to a table every meal in a close room with the smell of cooking coming in, and if Mr. Crow would cook up a few things that would taste good cold he'd pack the basket (that is, Mr. 'Possum would) and Mr. 'Coon could carry it, and they'd go out somewhere and eat their dinner in a nice place under the trees.

Mr. 'Coon said he knew a pleasant place to go, and Mr. Crow said he'd cook one of Mr. Man's chickens, which Mr. 'Possum had brought home the night before, though it

would take time, he said, because it was pretty old—Mr. 'Possum having picked it out in the dark in a hurry.

So then they all flew around and put away things, and Mr. Crow got the chicken on while Mr. 'Coon sliced the bread and Mr. 'Possum cut the cake, which they had been saving for Sunday, and he picked out a pie too, and a nice book to read which Mr. Crow had found lying in Mr. Man's yard while the folks were at dinner. Then he packed the basket all neat and nice, and ate a little piece of the cake when Mr. 'Coon had stepped out to see how the chicken was coming along, and when the chicken was ready he cut it all up nicely, and he tasted of that a little, too, while Mr. Crow was getting on his best picnic things to go.

And pretty soon they all started out, and it was so bright and sunny that Mr. 'Possum began to sing a little, and Mr. 'Coon told him not to make a noise like that or they'd have company—Mr. Dog or Mr. Fox or somebody—when there was only just enough chicken for themselves, which made Mr. 'Possum stop right away. And before long they came to a very quiet place under some thick hemlock-trees behind a stone wall and close to a brook of clear water.

That was the place Mr. 'Coon had thought of, and they sat down there and spread out all the things on some moss, and everything looked so nice that Mr. 'Possum said they ought to come here every day and eat dinner as long as the

AND HE TASTED OF THAT A LITTLE, TOO

hot weather lasted. Then they were all so hungry that they began on the chicken right away, and Mr. 'Possum said that maybe he *might* have picked out a tenderer one, but that he didn't think he could have found a bigger one, or one that would have lasted longer, and that, after all, size and lasting were what one needed for a picnic.

So they ate first one thing and then another, and Mr. 'Coon asked if they remembered the time Mr. Dog had come to one of their picnics before they were friends with him, when he'd really been invited to stay away; and they all laughed when they thought how Mr. Rabbit had excused himself, and the others, too, one after another, until Mr. Dog had the picnic mostly to himself. And by-and-by the Hollow Tree People lit their pipes and smoked, and Mr. 'Possum leaned his back against a tree and read himself to sleep, and dreamed, and had a kind of a nightmare about that other picnic, and talked in his sleep about it, which made Mr. 'Coon think of something to do.

So then Mr. 'Coon got some long grass and made a strong band of it and very carefully tied Mr. 'Possum to the tree, and just as Mr. 'Possum began to have his dream again and was saying "Oh! Oh! here comes Mr. Dog!" Mr. 'Coon gave three loud barks right in Mr. 'Possum's ear, and Mr. Crow said "Wake up! Wake up, Mr. 'Possum! Here he comes!"

MR. 'POSSUM LEANED HIS BACK AGAINST A TREE
AND READ HIMSELF TO SLEEP

And Mr. 'Possum did wake up, and jumped and jerked at that band, and holloed out as loud as he could:

"Oh, please let me go, Mr. Dog! Oh, please let me go, Mr. Dog!" for he thought it was Mr. Dog that had him, and he forgot all about them being friends.

But just then he happened to see Mr. Crow and Mr. 'Coon rolling on the ground and laughing, and he looked down to see what had him and found he was tied to a tree, and he knew that they had played a joke on him. That made him pretty mad at first, and he said if he ever got loose he'd pay them back for their smartness.

Then Mr. 'Coon told him he most likely never would get loose if he didn't promise not to do anything, so Mr. 'Possum promised, and Mr. 'Coon untied him. Mr. 'Possum said he guessed the chicken must have been pretty hard to digest, and he knew it was pretty salt, for he was dying for a good cold drink.

Then Mr. 'Coon said he knew where there was a spring over beyond the wall that had colder water than the brook, and he'd show them the way to it. So they climbed over the wall and slipped through the bushes to the spring, and all took a nice cold drink, and just as they raised their heads from drinking they heard somebody say something. And they all kept perfectly still and listened, and they heard it again, just beyond some bushes.

SO MR. 'POSSUM PROMISED, AND MR. 'COON UNTIED HIM

So then they crept softly in among the green leaves and branches and looked through, and what do you think they saw?

The Story Teller turns to the Little Lady, who seems a good deal excited.

"Why, why, what did they see?" she says. "Tell me, quick!"

"Why," the Story Teller goes on, "they saw the Little Lady and the Story Teller having a picnic too, with all the nice things spread out by a rock, under the hemlock-trees."

"Oh," gasps the Little Lady, "did they really see us? and are they there now?"

"They might be," says the Story Teller. "The Hollow Tree People slip around very softly. Anyway, they were there then, and it was the first time they had ever seen the Little Lady and the Story Teller so close. And they watched them until they were all through with their picnic and had gathered up their things. Then the 'Coon and the 'Possum and Old Black Crow slipped away again, and crept over the wall and gathered up their own things and set out for home very happy."

The Little Lady grasps the Story Teller's hand.

"Let's go and see their picnic place!" she says. "They may be there now."

So the Little Lady and the Story Teller go softly down to

"AND WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY SAW?"

the spring and get a drink; then they creep across to the mossy stone wall and peer over, and there, sure enough, is a green mossy place in the shade, the very place to spread a picnic; and the Little Lady jumps and says "Oh!" for she sees something brown whisk into the bushes. Anyhow, she knows the Hollow Tree People have been there, for there is a little piece of paper on the moss which they must have used to wrap up something, and she thinks they most likely heard her coming and are just gone.

So the Story Teller lifts her over the wall, and they sit down on the green moss of the Hollow Tree picnic place, and she leans up against him and listens to the singing of the brook, and the Story Teller sings softly too, until by-and-by the Little Lady is asleep.

And it may be, as they sit there and drowse and dream, that the Hollow Tree People creep up close and watch them.

Who knows?

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